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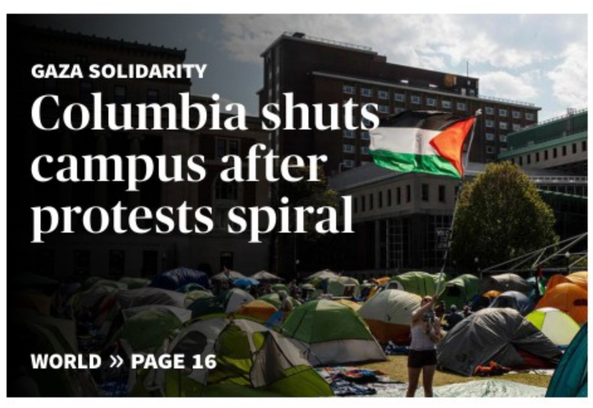

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Trade unions should produce them

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Pant returns to India squad for T20 WC

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Prajwal suspended from party; SIT serves notice

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

While incumbent Hassan JD(S) MP Prajwal Revanna was suspended from the party on Tuesday after a core committee meeting, the Special Investigation Team (SIT) set up to probe an alleged sex scandal involving him has sent notices to both the MP and his father and Holenarasipur MLA H.D. Revanna to appear for investigation.

Mr. Prajwal Revanna is said to have left for Europe on April 27 morning. His father, however, said that the trip was pre-scheduled and before he knew of a probe. Parallelly, SIT officials are working on identifying more victims in the videos being circulated containing explicit content allegedly involving the MP.

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Come clean on timing of Kejriwal arrest: SC to ED

Bench tells the agency that 'life and liberty' is very important; Delhi Chief Minister's petition argues that the action came just before Lok Sabha election in order to crush the Opposition

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) would have to justify the timing of the arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the excise policy case on March 21, barely a week after the Model Code of Conduct for the Lok Sabha election came into force.

A Bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta wound up the second consecutive day of hearings in a petition filed by Mr. Kejriwal, on his fifth furlough of remand till May 7, with a parting shot at the Central agency.

"Life and liberty is very important. We cannot deny that," Justice Khanna reminded Additional Solicitor General S.V. Raju, who will open the ED's counter arguments on May 3.

Calling on: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann leaves after meeting Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal in Tihar Jail on Tuesday. ANI

Justice Khanna said the Central agency has to address the court "on the timing of his [Mr. Kejriwal's] arrest before the elections".

The court's insistence that the agency should address the issue was significant as the Delhi Chief Minister has based his petition on the argument that his arrest was timed to crush the Opposition ahead of the general election.

Mr. Kejriwal and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) he heads have portrayed the ED as a "tool" for the ruling BJP.

"What was so imminent about my arrest? Was I a hardened criminal or a terrorist who would run away... So, did you leave a guilty Chief Minister to roam free all these years?" senior advocate A.M. Singhvi, appearing for the Chief Minister, had argued on Monday.

The ED has maintained that the arrest was based on material evidence. "Criminal" politicians cannot expect immunity from arrest on the grounds that they want to campaign for elections, the agency had retorted in an 87-page affidavit.

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POLL TIME, PRISON TIME
» PAGE 10

SC slams IMA chief's remarks about court

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Tables turned on Tuesday when the Supreme Court took stern exception to comments reportedly made by Indian Medical Association (IMA) president R.V. Asokan in an interview about the court's criticism of practices of private doctors.

"After all this, you do this? The IMA has not covered itself with glory... How can you decide which way we [Supreme Court] should go?" Justice Hima Kohli asked the IMA lawyers.

The media interview of Mr. Asokan was brought to the attention of a Bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Ahsanuddin Amanullah by Patanjali Ayurved's lawyer, senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi.

The contempt proceedings against Patanjali Ayurved, its co-founder Baba Ramdev and his close associate Acharya Balkrishna were initiated in a petition filed by the IMA.

Meanwhile, the court "appreciated" the second round of unconditional apologies published by Patanjali, Ramdev and Balkrishna in over 300 newspapers.

However, the court ordered them to file the original pages of the newspapers in which the apology was published.

CONTINUED ON
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Patanjali case: SC chides State body

NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Tuesday expressed dissatisfaction at the Uttarakhand State Licensing Authority, saying it only "woke up" and moved against Patanjali Ayurved and its co-founder Baba Ramdev after the top court intervened and passed orders. » PAGE 12

Bengaluru sees driest April in 41 years

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

With the pre-monsoon showers eluding Bengaluru, the city witnessed the driest April in the last four decades.

The India Meteorological Department observatory recorded 0 mm of rainfall during the month. The last time such a phenomenon was observed was in 1983.

According to the Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre's (KSNDMC) district-wise cumulative rainfall recorded between April 1 and 30, 12 districts, including Bengaluru Urban, received large deficiency rainfall during this period.

The IMD has said the temperature in the first week of May may breach the 39°C mark, and Bengalureans may have to wait for at least another two weeks for some respite.

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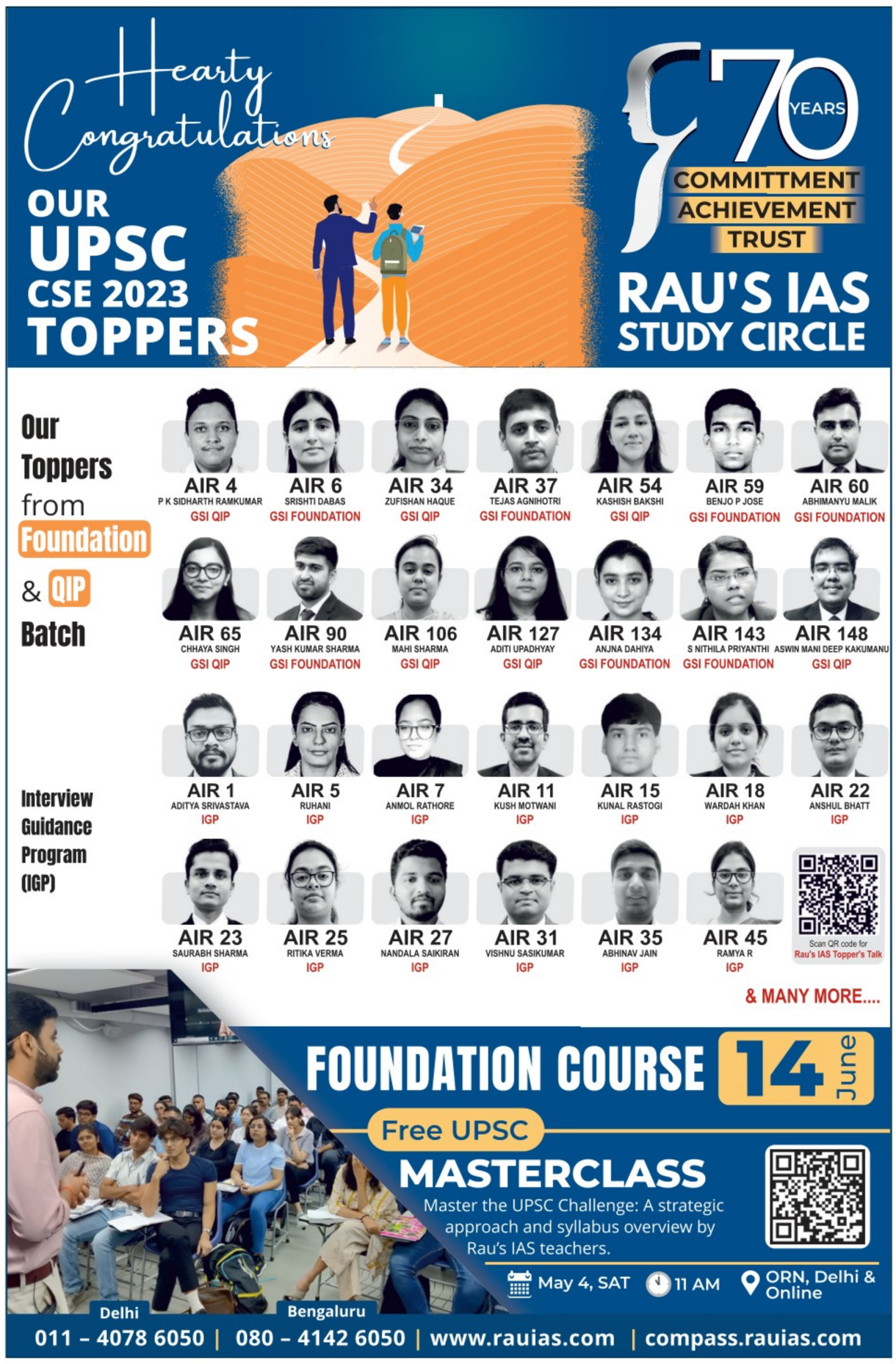
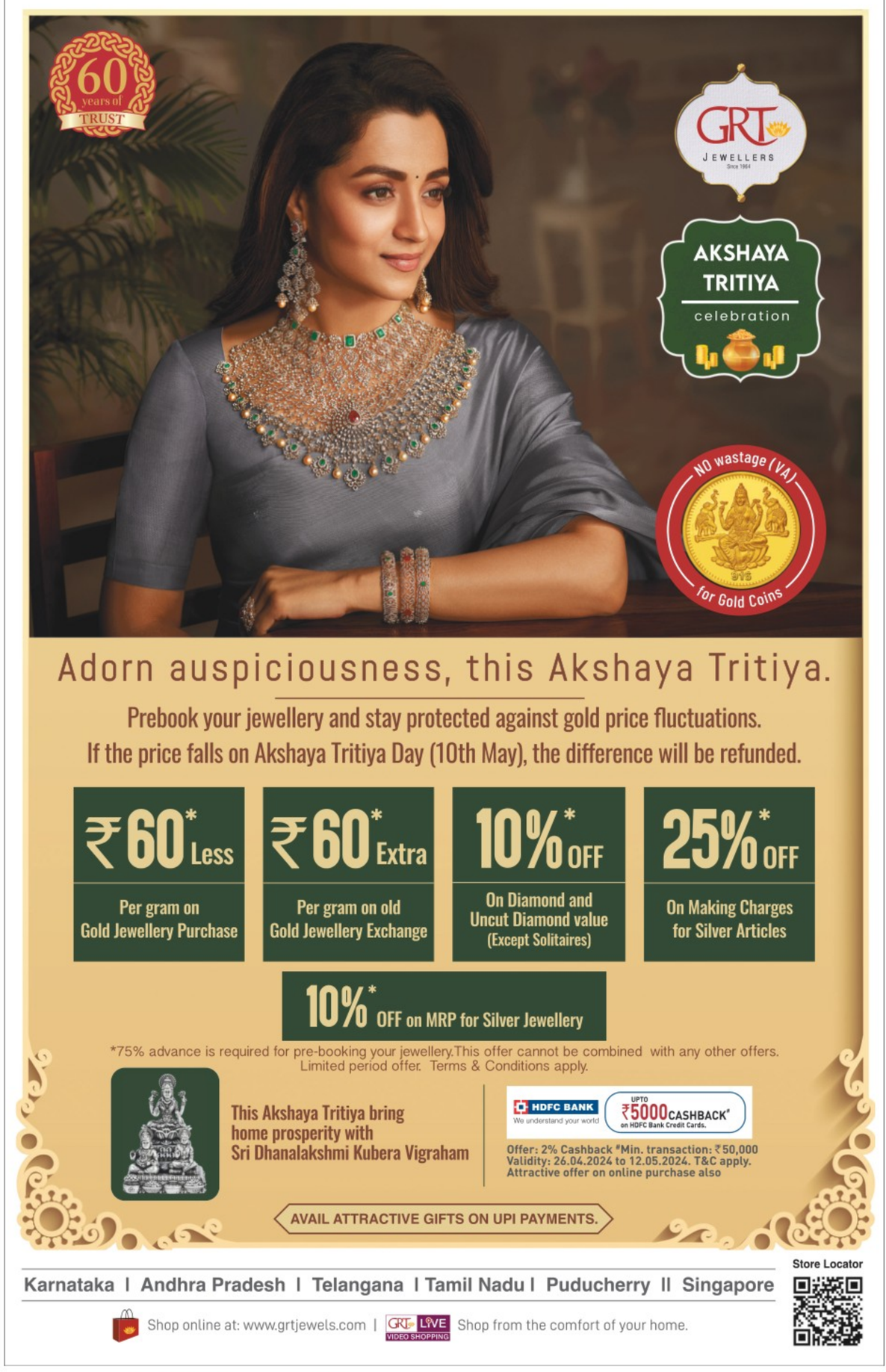
» PAGE 3





Senna Sempre

Thirty years after a horrifying crash left the world stunned and took the life of a man who was, and remains arguably, the best racer the sport has seen, here's how the world of motorsport still bears his indelible mark

GETTY IMAGES

S. Dipak Ragav

There are moments in time, however tragic they may be, that change the course of history and even force changes for the good.

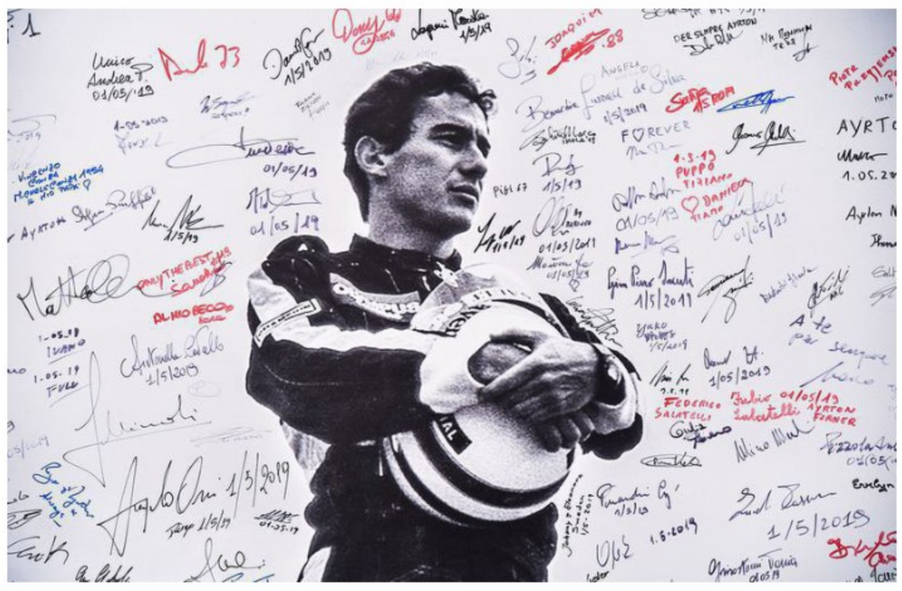
May 1, 1994, was one of those seminal moments in the history of Formula One. Arguably the greatest driver to have graced the sport until then, Ayrton Senna da Silva suffered a fatal crash on the seventh lap of the San Marino Grand Prix while leading the race at the now-infamous Tamburello corner of the Autodromo Enzo e Dino Ferrari circuit in Imola.

It marked one of the darkest chapters in the championship since its inception in 1950. Senna's crash on Sunday was the second fatality of that weekend after Roland Ratzenberger had lost his life during qualifying on Saturday. The Austrian driver hit a wall at high speed when his Simtek Ford suffered a front-wing failure. In fact, it was F1's weekend from hell. On Friday, another Brazilian, Rubens Barichello, had a severe crash during practice when he hit a kerb and got launched into the barriers. Only the timely intervention of F1 doctor Sid Watkins saved his life.

The three-time World champion moved to the all-conquering Williams F1 team for the '94 season after his long stint with McLaren, where he had won all his titles. In 1992 and 1993, Williams dominated the sport after mastering the Active Suspension Technology, powering Nigel Mansell and Alain Prost to the driver's crown. However, in 1994, the FIA banned electronic driver aids like active suspension, traction control and launch control. And Williams struggled during the initial part of the season.

Senna did not score points in the first two races when he crashed out in his home race in Brazil before being taken out by Mika Hakkinen in the second one in Aida, Japan. In Imola, the Brazilian took pole position. There was a massive crash on the opening lap. Pedro Lamy, in his Lotus, hit the rear of JJ Lheto's Benetton, which stalled on the grid. The Safety Car was brought in to clear the debris for the next five laps before racing resumed on lap six.

On lap seven, Senna's car veered straight into the concrete barrier as it approached the fast left-hander Tamburello corner. The driver suffered severe injuries when one of the tyres hit his helmet while a piece of suspension also pierced past his visor. There have been many theories surrounding the reason for the crash, from a driver mistake or a puncture to a steering column failure and even a drop in tyre pressure due to running behind a very slow Safety Car. Senna was given emergency treatment at the track before being airlifted to a hospital in Bologna, where he was pronounced dead three hours later.



World Championships: 3 (1988, 1990-91)
Number of races: 161
Number of wins: 41
Number of pole positions: 65
Career points: 610

Prior to the events in Imola, F1 had not seen a casualty during a race meeting since Riccardo Paletti's fatal crash at the 1982 Canadian Grand Prix. The deaths of Ratzenberger and Senna sent shockwaves across the world and illustrated the dangerous nature of motorsport.

It was the kind of rude awakening the sport needed. Leading up to Imola 1994, there were apprehensions that cars were getting faster and safety needed to be improved. The fact that one of the best, if not THE best, the sport has seen succumbed woke the powers that be out of their slumber.

Immediately, the FIA sprung into action, and a slew of safety measures have been enforced since then, making F1 one of the safest categories of motorsport.

Some changes to the car included raised cockpit sides to protect the head, better headrest protection, and wheel tethers.

One of the most significant advances was the introduction of the Head and Neck Support (HANS) device in the early 2000s. The HANS device is attached to the driver's helmet and, as the name suggests, significantly reduces the impact on the head and neck. Many drivers have avoided severe impacts since then. Though drivers initially resisted it as it restricted their movement, it has become ubiquitous across most categories.

More recently, the Halo device - a wishbone-like structure around the cockpit was introduced in 2018 to protect a loose wheel or, at times, even the wheels of another airborne car from hitting the driver's helmet. The wheel tethers ensure the tyres don't come loose quickly in case of a big crash or suspension damage.

Apart from the changes to the car, much work has been done on circuit safety in terms of barriers, run-offs, and fences. F1 has constantly reviewed safety measures and updated tyre and TechPro barriers to find ways to reduce the impact on the driver during violent crashes. Modern circuits have many asphalt run-off areas, which helps drivers avoid crashes even if they run wide.

However, the flip side of these has been that there is a perception that drivers don't pay the penalty for going off, which has taken the challenge out of the sport. It is a tricky balance between safety and fairness, but begrudgingly, safety has been prioritised.

The fact that Formula One did not see another driver fatality for another 21 years showed the sport's remarkable progress since that fateful weekend in Imola in 1994. In 2015, Jules Bianchi became the first driver since Senna to die because of an accident at an F1 race. During the 2014 Japanese Grand Prix, the Marussia driver hit a recovery vehicle attending to another stricken car away from the race track. But in damp conditions, Bianchi ran wide and hit the recovery vehicle, and his car slid under the wheel-loader, causing a significant head injury. In a way, the accident further accelerated the need for a device like a halo to protect the cockpit without losing the essence of what F1 is - an open-wheel, open-cockpit racing series.

A lot of credit also has to go to the Grand Prix Drivers' Association (GPDA), which has worked closely with circuit promoters, the FIA and F1 to advance safety measures. Incidentally, on the morning of May 1, Senna proposed reviving the GPDA - which was disbanded between 1982 and 1994 - after Ratzenberger's death and offered to lead the organisation. The modern version of GPDA came into being immediately after the events of Imola. While Senna's blinding speed, mastery of wet conditions, and ability to be hard-nosed in battle are what people will remember him for, the Brazilian left an indelible mark even from the beyond, ensuring the sport he lorded over is safer even if it required his ultimate sacrifice.

THE GIST

- Senna, known for his talent in rainy races, did not have a good result in his first kart race on a wet track. Because of that, he trained every day until he became a master in this condition
- The Brazilian's favourite track was Spa in Belgium, a circuit where he won five times in F1
- Senna always dreamed of, but never raced for, Ferrari. But Luca di Montezemolo, then president of the Italian team, revealed that there were strong negotiations as early as 1994 to make this happen. "He wanted to come to Ferrari and I wanted him on the team," said the manager
- The striking helmet worn by Senna throughout his career was inspired by the design used by the Brazilian delegation at the 1979 Karting World Championship

Man loses ₹72 lakh after being lured into putting SIM in free mobile phone

South Division Cybercrime police register a case under the IT Act, 2000, and also for impersonation and cheating

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 56-year-old head of a private firm lost ₹72 lakh to cybercriminals who promised a free credit card from a leading private bank. The man lost ₹72 lakh after inserting his SIM card into a new mobile phone that he got from the bank as a gift.

Based on his complaint, the South Division Cybercrime police have registered a case under the IT Act, 2000, and also for impersonation and cheating.

ILLUSTRATION: SEBASTIAN FRANCIS

The complaint is Basavaraju G.E., a resident of Bikasipura in south Bengaluru. According to his complaint, Basavaraju received a call from a person claiming to be an executive of a private bank and offered a free lifetime credit card based on his bank transactions and CIBIL score.

Initially, Basavaraju agreed to take up the offer, but later refused when the caller sought personal details and mobile phone authentication. However the caller persuaded him by offering a complimentary mobile phone and instructed him to insert his SIM card into the new phone for authentication.

A few hours later, Basavaraju received a brand new phone through a courier. He then followed the instruction of the caller, and inserted his SIM card in the new phone. Within minutes, ₹66,10,421 was debited from his savings bank account, along with ₹5,96,044 from his credit card, totalling ₹72 lakh.

Basavaraju tried to call the executive, but the number was out of reach.

Realising that he had been cheated, he called the cybercrime helpline 1930, and reported the matter before rushing to the South Division Cybercrime police station.

Man loses ₹52.6 lakh

In another incident, a 50-year-old businessman from Mahalakshmipuram lost ₹52.6 lakh to cybercriminals in a bid to get a cash reward of ₹1.04 crore that he was offered by an unknown person.

The victim, Satish Shetty, paid the amount in instalments on different dates from March 11 to April 16 until he realised he had been cheated and approached the North Division Cybercrime police.

According to the complaint, Mr. Shetty received a message that he had won a cash prize from a private firm through a scratch card. He was asked to claim the money. When Mr. Shetty contacted the person, he was advised to pay 4% as TDS to claim the prize. As soon as the money was transferred online, Mr. Shetty received another message asking him to pay GST, CGST and International GST total amounting to ₹25 lakh.

Initially Mr. Shetty was reluctant about paying, but eventually transferred the money. Then, he get a message to pay another ₹26 lakh towards various taxes and dues, failing which the cash prize will be sent for donation and a criminal case would be initiated against him. Scared of legal problems, Mr. Shetty transferred the money. At that point, he realised that he had been duped.

Online game addiction: Four held for extorting ₹40 lakh from student

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The police arrested four men for allegedly extorting over ₹40 lakh from a 16-year-old high school student by blackmailing him about his online game addiction.

The class 10 student, the son of a city-based builder, was addicted to online gaming. Two of his classmates, who were aware of his addiction, decided to make money out of it.

Police Commissioner B. Dayananda said that the classmates started to blackmail the boy. They threatened to inform his parents about his addiction and demanded money. They showed photos of some goons to the boy and threatened to harm him if he failed to pay up.

Scared, the boy stole 700 gram of gold valuables and some cash, totally amounting to ₹41.5 lakh, from his house and gave them to the classmates. The classmates gave the valuables to their contacts in Gangavathy town in Koppal district of Karnataka to dispose them suitably.

Valuables missing

The incident came to light on April 14 when the boy's parents could not find the valuables.

The parents inquired with their son, who confessed. Based on a complaint filed on April 15, the Rajarajeshwarinagar police tracked down the boy's classmates and, through them, arrested four of their accomplices – M. Karthik Kumar, 32, Sunil Suryakanth, 30, Veman Narendra, 19, and Vivek Rajashekhar, 19, from Gangavathy. They recovered the valuables and ₹25 lakh in cash.

Mr. Dayananda announced a cash reward to the police team that investigated the case.

The police recorded the statement of the boy's classmates. They were counselled and let off on station bail. The rest of the accused have been booked for blackmail, extortion and on other charges, and remanded to judicial custody.

Techie duped by 'prospective bride' on matrimonial site

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 36-year-old software engineer was cheated by "prospective bride" on a matrimonial site who offered to help him earn quick money through online investment and escaped with ₹26 lakh over one-and-a-half months.

The victim, a resident of Horamavu, filed a complaint with the east division cybercrime police on Friday. In his complaint, the victim said he was checking a popular online matrimony portal for matching profiles and came across one Bhavika on March 3. Introducing herself as an investment banker, Bhavika told him that she was into online trading and offered to teach the tricks of the trade to him to earn more money.

Carried away, he exchanged contact numbers and chatted on WhatsApp before Bhavika helped him enrol in an online trading website and offered to help him invest the initial ₹1 lakh. The trade went well and the victim was excited that he earned ₹7,500. Bhavika even helped him withdraw the money.

The next day, Bhavika advised him to invest more money to earn a good profit following which he invested his savings of ₹10 lakh, But to his shock, he lost all the money in one trade. Bhavika soon advised him to invest another round of big money to recover his loss. With no money left, he borrowed a personal loan of ₹16 lakh from a bank on April 17 and invested it.

According to him, the trade went well and his trade account showed huge profit margin. The cheating came to light when he asked her help withdraw the money to which she asked him to invest ₹10 lakh again. Suspecting something fishy, he checked with his friends and realised that he had been duped.

The police found the suspect was operating from the U.K. based on the country code of the WhatsApp number used.

Habitual offender held for house-break cases

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Rajarajeshwarinagar police on Monday arrested a 33-year-old habitual offender allegedly involved in four house-break cases soon after he was released on bail.

The accused Ganesh Ramakrishnachari, a resident of Jalahalli, allegedly involved in 16 cases, was arrested by Puttenahalli police a few months ago in one of the cases.

After coming out on bail, he continued to break into houses to steal valuables. According to the police, the accused worked as a plumber and carpenter and was aware of how to break doors and locks using different tools. The accused broke into a house situated in BEML Layout and escaped with 400 gm of gold valuables.

Based on the complaint, the police verified several CCTV camera footages before zeroing in on Ganesh from a hotel in Channasandra where he was having lunch. With his arrest, the police said they have cracked four house-break thefts reported in RR Nagar, Subramanyapura, Chandra Layout, and Annapoorneshwari Nagar police station limits. The police have recovered 210 gm of gold valuables and over one kilo of silver articles worth ₹13.5 lakh.

30-year-old held under POCSO Act

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Madanayakanahalli police on Monday arrested a 30-year-old vegetable vendor for allegedly sexually assaulting an eight-year-old at his house.

According to the police, the victim and her parents were staying as tenants in his house. The victim's parents were away at work and she was alone at home. The accused allegedly sexually assaulted her and fled the scene, leaving the girl bleeding.

The police registered a case against him under POCSO Act and remanded him to judicial custody.

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Microbes, not fossil fuels, produced most new methane: study

A modelling study has found methane emissions from fossil fuels declined between 1990 and the 2000s and have been stable since, whereas microbes have been producing more methane of late. One reason could be an increase in cattle-rearing in Latin America and more emissions from waste in South and Southeast Asia

Monika Mondal

For the last three years, Naveen Chandra has been spending most of his days running simulations at the Research Institute for Global Change in Japan. He is trying to recreate the last 50 years of the earth's atmosphere on a supercomputer roughly the size of an auditorium.

Mr. Chandra has been trying to answer a question that came out of his team's research. During 2019-2020, these researchers examined the concentration of methane in the atmosphere and how it changed with time. Until the 1990s, the concentration increased, then stabilised for a bit, and then started to increase again around 2007. According to recent estimates, the atmospheric concentration of methane today is three-times what it was 300 years ago.

Where is this methane coming from? That's what they wanted to know.

Evolving understanding

Methane is the second most abundant anthropogenic greenhouse gas after carbon dioxide (CO_2) but it warms the planet more. Over a century, methane has a global warming potential 28-times greater than CO_2, and even higher over shorter periods like two decades.

It wasn't until recently that policymakers began to focus on methane vis-a-vis addressing global warming. At the U.N. climate talks in 2021, member countries launched the 'Global Methane Pledge' to cut the gas's emissions and slow the planet's warming. Yet our understanding of methane also continues to evolve.

For instance,Mr. Chandra and his team recently reported that microbes have been the biggest sources of methane in the atmosphere, not the burning of fossil fuels.

The sources of methane

Scientists are increasingly recognising various sources of methane, most of which fit in two categories: biogenic and thermogenic. When fossil fuels such as natural gas or oil are extracted from deep within the earth's crust, thermogenic methane is released. Biogenic methane comes from microbial action.

The microbes that produce methane are archaea – single-celled microorganisms distinct from bacteria and eukaryotes – and are called methanogens. They thrive in oxygen-deficient environments, such as the digestive tracts of animals, wetlands, rice paddies, landfills, and the sediments of lakes and oceans.

Methanogens play a crucial role in the global carbon cycle by converting organic matter into methane. While methane is a potent greenhouse gas, its production by methanogens is an essential part of natural ecosystems. But human activities like agriculture, dairy farming, and fossil fuel production have further increased methane emissions.

A cow walks through a field as an oil pumpjack and a flare burn off methane and other hydrocarbons in the background in the Permian Basin, Texas. Methanogenic bacteria thrive in oxygen-deficient environments, including the digestive tracts of animals. AP

Both biogenic and thermogenic activities produce different isotopes of methane. Tracking the isotopes is a way to track which sources are the most active.

Modelling with a supercomputer

According to Prabir Patra, principal scientist at the Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology (JAMSTEC) and one of the lead authors of the study, carbon-13 is key. (Atoms of this carbon isotope have 13 nucleons: 6 protons + 7 neutrons.)

If there are fewer carbon-13 atoms than a certain level in a group of 1,000 methane molecules, the methane is from a biological source. If the methane is from thermogenic sources, such as trapped fossil fuels or geological activities, there will be more carbon-13 atoms in 1,000 molecules.

> According to recent estimates, the atmospheric concentration of methane today is three-times what it was 300 years ago

Mr. Chandra and Mr. Patra worked with scientists from Austria, Japan, the Netherlands, and the U.S. to collect data from the 12 monitoring sites worldwide tracking atmospheric parameters since the 1990s. Then they sorted the methane isotope data by year and ran it through a program they had developed to recreate the atmosphere from 1980 to 2020 on a supercomputer.

"One year of data analysis takes about four to five hours," Mr. Chandra said.

Data mismatch

Finally, the team compared their own results with two emissions inventories, called EDGAR and GAINS, and found some discrepancies. EDGAR had reported that methane emissions from oil and natural gas exploration had increased between 1990 and 2020. GAINS had recorded a large "unconventional" rise in emissions since 2006. Their findings disagreed with both inventories.

Mr. Patra said combining the numbers for all biogenic and thermogenic isotopes should match the total emissions in a year. They also took insights from other available data like, number of rice fields, wetlands, dairy farms, biomass burning and likewise sources of methane emissions, and estimated the emissions from those sources. But when they ran their atmosphere models with this data, the year-wise total methane emissions overshot the total production.

In fact, the models said methane emissions from fossil fuels declined between 1990 and the 2000s and that they've been stable since. They also found microbes were producing more methane than fossil fuels.

Need for local data

One possible reason could be an increase in cattle-rearing in Latin America and more emissions from waste in South and Southeast Asia, Latin America, and Africa, the study's authors wrote in their paper. They added that the number of wetlands worldwide had increased as well.

Studies in the past have pointed to microbes like anaerobic archaea as potentially top contributors of atmospheric methane using satellite data. But according to Mr. Patra, "Most studies that use satellites cannot measure the actual [changes over time] of methane." Satellite data is interpreted using models "and thus are prone to uncertainties." He said ground models are required to confirm these interpretations.

He added that their own atmospheric model was also only the beginning. The data for it came from observatories located in far-flung places. "If you really want to ask what is from the wetland, what is from the rice fields, we need measurements in those exact locations," per Mr. Patra. "We don't have that kind of observation at all anywhere in the world to make that kind of measurement. We can only speak for global emissions."

But what we do know is: "If you want to reduce methane, anthropogenic activity should be first controlled. And we can clearly outline what is anthropogenic here. Waste and landfills, rice fields, enteric fermentation, oil and gas, and coal," he said.

(Monika Mondal is a freelance science and environment journalist.)

THE GIST

Methane is the second most abundant anthropogenic greenhouse gas after carbon dioxide but it warms the planet more. Over a century, methane has a global warming potential 28-times greater than CO_2

Methane is released by two main processes: biogenic and thermogenic. When fossil fuels are extracted from the earth's crust, thermogenic methane is released. Biogenic methane comes from microbial action

Studies in the past have pointed to microbes like anaerobic archaea as potentially top contributors of atmospheric methane using satellite data, but this information contains gaps that ground-based models can bridge

BIG SHOT

Mount Ruang seen erupting from Tagulandang island in Sitaro, North Sulawesi, on Tuesday. Ruang's eruption prompted authorities to order an evacuation and forced a nearby airport to close. The remote Indonesian volcano sent a tower of ash spewing into the sky on April 19. AFP

QUESTION CORNER

Shivering produces heat to keep you warm

Q:Why do we shiver when it is cold?

A: Shivering (physical thermogenesis) occurs when the tension of the skeletal muscles rises beyond a critical level or when the body temperature falls below the critical level of 37.1 degrees C.

Shivering is actually an involuntary contraction of muscles to maintain body temperature during fever and in cool environments. It involves oscillating skeletal-muscle contractions that occur at 10-20 per second. The movement is at first irregular, then assumes quick involuntary movements during which small groups of muscles contract asynchronously. Due to the asynchronous movement, they do not move the parts associated with them in a coordinated manner.

The posterior hypothalamus region in the brain harbours the primary motor centre responsible for shivering. When the body temperature falls below 37.1 degrees C, the skin sends cold signals to the spinal cord. These are picked by the hypothalamus, which takes advantage of the fact that increased skeletal-muscle activity generates heat. Acting through descending pathways that terminate on the motor neurons controlling the body's skeletal muscles, the hypothalamus gradually increases skeletal-muscle tone (constant level of tension within muscles).

EGOR IVLEV/UNSPLASH

Thus shivering begins throughout the body when the tension of the skeletal muscles rises beyond the critical level, producing heat and increasing the temperature of the body within a matter of seconds. Studies reveal that shivering may produce as much as 42.5 cal/hr, almost seven times greater than man's normal resting metabolism at room temperature. In a resting person, most body heat is produced by the thoracic and abdominal organs due to ongoing metabolic activities.

Generally, shivering is seen only in birds and mammals.

For feedback and suggestions
for 'Science', please write to
science@thehindu.co.in
with the subject 'Daily page'

City experiences driest April in 41 years

The last time such a phenomenon was observed was in 1983 when Bengaluru did not receive any rainfall

Hemanth C.S.
BENGALURU

With the pre-monsoon showers eluding Bengaluru, the city has witnessed the driest April in the last four decades. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) observatory recorded 0 mm of rainfall during the month. This phenomenon was last observed in 1983. Since then, there has been rainfall in April every year.

"In 1983, we did not record any rain in April. Since then, we have had rain/light rainfall in April. After 1983, this is the first year when we have not had any rainfall, making this April the driest in the last 41 years," IMD officials said.

On April 19 and 20, some parts of the city received a light drizzle, the first in 2024. However, the IMD's observation data recorded at 5.30 p.m. on April 19 stated that the three stations–Bengaluru City, Kempegowda International Airport, and HAL airport–received 0 mm rainfall. Likewise, on April 20, Bengaluru city recorded 0 mm rainfall and the two other stations recorded trace (less than 0.2 mm) rainfall.

According to the Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre's (KSNDMC) district-wise cumulative rainfall recorded between April 1 and 30, 12 districts, including Bengaluru Urban, received a large rainfall deficiency during this period. The 12 districts are Bengaluru Urban, Bengaluru Rural, Chickballapur, Tumakuru, Chitradurga, Ballari, Hassan, Kodagu, Mandya, Mysuru, Chamarajanagar, and Ramanagara.

According to the data, six districts–Yadgir, Raichur, Koppal, Vijayanagar, Davangere, and Dakshina Kannada–had a deficiency in rainfall. One district, Kolar, recorded no rainfall.

Six districts received normal rainfall: Belagavi, Bagalkot, Dharwad, Gadag, Haveri and Chikkamagaluru. Three districts - Vijayapura, Uttara Kannada and Shivamogga - received excess rainfall, and three districts - Bidar, Kalaburagi and Udupi - received large excess rainfall.

Rainfall is considered normal when it varies between +19% and -19%, deficient when it varies between -20% and -59%, large deficient when it is -60% or less, excess when it varies between +20% and +59% and large excess when it is +60% and above.

As per KSNDMC's district-wise pre-monsoon rainfall pattern-2024 recorded between March 1 and April 30, one district received no rainfall, 12 districts received significant deficit rainfall, eight districts received deficit rainfall, eight districts received normal rainfall, and two districts received excess rainfall.

A fruit vendor sets up an umbrella on a hot summer day in Bengaluru. AFP

Heatwave condition likely

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The IMD Bengaluru in their daily weather report for Karnataka issued at 12 noon on Tuesday issued a heatwave warning for the next seven days.

It said that heatwave conditions are likely to prevail at isolated places in Bidar, Kalaburagi, Vijayapura, Yadgir, Raichur, Bagalkot, Belagavi, Gadag, Dharwad, Haveri, Koppal, Vijayanagara, Davangere, Chitradurga, Tumakuru, Kolar, Mandya, Ballari, Hassan (Plains), Chamarajanagar, Bengaluru Urban, Bengaluru Rural, Ramanagara, Mysuru, Chikkamagaluru (Plains), and Chickballapur districts till May 4. It said light to moderate rain is very likely to occur over parts of Bengaluru Urban areas on May 5.

"Light to moderate rain is very likely to occur over some parts of Kodagu, Mysuru, Mandya, and Chamarajanagar districts. Light rain is likely to occur over some parts of Ballari, Chikkamagaluru, Chitradurga, Hassan, Shivamogga, Tumakuru, Vijayanagara, Ramanagara, Bengaluru Rural, Bengaluru Urban, Chickballapura and Kolar districts. Dry weather is likely to prevail over remaining districts."

Below normal rains in May too; mercury likely to dip only in third week in Bengaluru

K.V. Aditya Bharadwaj
BENGALURU

As the scorching summer enters May, Bengalureans may have to wait for at least another two weeks for some respite.

The maximum temperature in April breached the 38°C mark and recorded 38.5°C, as against a mean maximum temperature of 34°C. The hottest April day was recorded in 2016 when the mercury hit 39.2°C.

"The temperature in the first week of May may breach the 39°C mark and will start coming down in the third week of May," said C.S. Patil, scientist and director, IMD, Bengaluru. "After May 15, westerly winds that bring the monsoon rains will start setting in in South Interior Karnataka. This will bring the mercury down," he said.

However, he said rainfall in the city in May will be below normal. "Some rains are expected in the first week of May, after which there may be a temporary dip in temperature and it will rise again," he said.

Climate conditions of city 1981- 2010

	Mean temperature (°Celsius)		Mean total rainfall (in mm)	Mean number of rainy days
	Max Temp	Min Temp		
April	34	22	41.5	3.1
May	33.3	21.7	107.4	6.4

Water situation 'stable'

Meanwhile, the drinking water crisis in the city is as severe as April as there were no April showers. However, the good news is that the crisis seems to have not worsened and it is "stable".

"The drinking water situation in the city is stable and manageable. Contrary to our fears, more borewells haven't gone dry in the past month. As water from Cauvery required for the city is assured, the situation remains almost the same," said V. Ram Prasath Manohar, Chairman, Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB).

At least 6,900 of the 14,000 government borewells in the city had gone dry in April.

The board has drilled over 140 new borewells in the city since March and has had a 90% success rate. "The government has approved drilling 313 new borewells, of which we have drilled over 140 of them. The crisis is severe in Bengaluru East taluk and we may drill more borewells there in May, wherever there is a need," Mr. Manohar said.

The BWSSB will focus on water conservation efforts in May as well. "We are seeing positive changes in water consumption patterns in the city. The demand for treated water has gone up to over 7 MLD, even as we have come up with technology to produce 5 MLD of 'zero' bacteria water, which will be provided to techparks to be used as AC coolant. We have installed aerators to over five lakh public taps in the city. April 30 was the deadline for the same. We will go for enforcement levying penalties over non-installation of aerators from Wednesday," Mr. Manohar said.

"We appeal to the people to adopt water conservation measures like installing aerators to taps in residences as well, judicious use of water at homes, and using treated water for secondary purposes in apartments and wherever possible in May as well. Even after we tide over the crisis, these need to be part of the daily practice," Mr. Manohar said.

Last rites of Srinivas Prasad performed with full state honours

Former Minister V. Srinivas Prasad's last rites being performed at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Cultural Trust in Mysuru on Tuesday. M.A. SRIRAM

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

The last rites of former Minister V. Srinivas Prasad, who died at a private hospital in Bengaluru on Monday, were performed with full state honours at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Cultural Trust on Manandavadi Road in Mysuru on Tuesday.

Prasad's family members, relatives and a large number of friends and admirers were present as the last rites were performed as per Buddhist practices.

Earlier, the mortal remains of Prasad, which had been kept at NTM Government School in Ashokapuram for the public to pay their last respects, were taken out in a procession. The van carrying Prasad's mortal remains passed through the thoroughfares of Ashokapuram, where he was born and spent his childhood days. A large number of people paid their last respects to the departed leader. The body was later taken to the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Cultural Trust near Karnataka Silk Industries Corporation (KSIC) premises on Manandavadi Road.

After the gun salute as per the State honours in the presence of senior officials of Mysuru district administration including Deputy Commissioner of Mysuru K.V. Rajendra and City Police Commissioner Ramesh B., Buddhist monks offered prayers and performed rituals.

Minister for Social Welfare H.C. Mahadevappa, who is also the Minister in charge of Mysuru district, was also present on the occasion.

Earlier in the day, people continued to visit NTM Government school, where Mr. Prasad's body was kept for public viewing.

The dignitaries offering their last respects to the departed leader included All India Congress Committee (AICC) President M. Mallikarjun Kharge. After consoling Prasad's family members, Mr. Kharge spoke to reporters and expressed his shock over the passing away of a "fighter", who strove for justice in the society, particularly for the Scheduled Castes and other depressed sections.

He said Prasad, who believed in the ideology of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, fought for his self-respect while remaining a honest politician who served society. Mr. Kharge refused to field political questions from reporters and said he would reply to them on a different occasion.

BJP MP Pratap Simha, who also paid his last respects to Prasad, turned emotional while recalling that the former Minister used to advise him in private and never insulted anyone in public. He said he was deeply pained by the demise of Prasad.

BWSSB implements advanced tech to produce zero bacterial water

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has implemented advanced technology to produce zero bacterial water at water treatment plants with the assistance of Indian Institute of Science (IISC) scientists.

The BWSSB produces 1,200 MLD of treated water from its plant everyday, which is currently supplied for non-domestic purposes as water contains certain bacteria which are harmful to humans. Everyday, 1,800 MLD of waste water is generated in the city.

According to a press release, the scientists, in a span of two weeks, developed an advanced water treatment technology to generate zero bacterial water. It is now installed at the plants and the water quality now meets the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board's criterion, said the release, adding that this water can be used for domestic purposes except drinking.

The release said BWSSB now produces one crore litre of zero bacterial water every day.

Installed in three units

This technology is installed at Agara, K.C. Valley and Bellandur STP units.

The release said several companies like Wipro, HAL, and others have shown interest in purchasing the water.

A van carrying BWSSB tertiary treated wastewater for non-potable purpose. FILE PHOTO

THE HINDU
OPPORTUNITIES

GENERAL

CHRISTIAN MEDICAL COLLEGE, VELLORE. INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR THE POST OF HEAD,
Centre for Stem Cell Research
(a unit of InStem Bengaluru) CMC Campus, Bagayam, Vellore-632 002.

Applications and Nominations are invited for the post of Head, Centre for Stem Cell Research, (CSCR-inStem), [www.cscr.in]. A translational Unit of the Institute for Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine (instem) [www.instem.res.in], Bengaluru, an autonomous Institute under the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India **https://dbtindia.gov.in/** located on the Bagayam campus of the Christian Medical College (CMC), Vellore. [www.cmch-vellore.edu].

The post is on a contract basis for a period up to 5 years and carries the pay scale of a professor at CMC, Vellore with other allowances and perks allowed for such positions in the institution. Applicants would typically be expected to have held senior leadership positions managing research in medical /scientific organizations and have 14 years of experience after MD or PhD in relevant research. Applications may be sent to **the Director, Christian Medical College, Ida Scudder Road, Vellore - 632004** so as to reach latest by 14th June 2024. The details of this advertisement and the format of application are available at the CSCR, instem and CMC, Vellore websites.

Essential: 1). MD, MS (Medical) or Ph.D in Life Sciences or equivalent. 2).Relevant experience in the area of translational research with emphasis in stem cell biology, regenerative medicine, cell and molecular biology and biotechnology. 3). Excellent track record, proven expertise of guiding research activities in these areas. 4). Experience in Science - administration will be an advantage. 5). The incumbent should be capable of running the translational unit as per the MoA between instem and CMC and in line with the norms and guidelines for functioning of an organisation with Government funding.

N.B: The Search-cum-Selection Committee is empowered to consider / nominate suitable persons of capability and eminence with lesser experience if otherwise suitable for this position. Payscale / emoluments will be commensurate with their experience. The maximum age limit for appointment **should not exceed 60 years** as on the closing date of receipt of nominations / applications. The application along with detailed curriculum vitae including the date of birth, address for correspondence including telephone no., fax and e-mail address, qualifications acquired, professional and research experience, present position and scale of pay with total emoluments, publication details and a 500 words write-up on the candidate's vision for CSCR-in Stem for the next 5-10 years may be sent to Director, Christian Medical College, Ida Scudder Road, Vellore - 632004 in a cover marked **"Nomination / Application for the Post of Head, CSCR" so as to reach latest by 14th June 2024.** The details of this advertisement and the format of application is available at the CSCR, inStem and CMC, Vellore websites mentioned above.

Jurisdiction: All legal disputes will be in the Jurisdiction of Vellore, Tamilnadu. **Information:** All information, corrigendum, etc to this recruitment shall be available on the website of CMC and instem only. **Communication:** All communication shall be in the email provided in the application. Please take care to provide a valid and accessible email id.

WALK-IN INTERVIEW FOR FACULTY POSITIONS
SRM UNIVERSITY AP

SRM University-AP invites applicants for the following positions in the Department of Computer Science & Engineering. Interested candidates are requested to attend the interviews in person.

Position: Ad-hoc Faculty
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For M.Tech. candidates, there is an opportunity to pursue a Ph.D.

Position: Assistant Professor
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Remuneration
• Competitive remuneration will be offered based on qualification and experience.

Candidates are advised to bring all relevant original documents along with a copy of their resume.

Walk-in Interview Schedule:
Date: May 3, 2024 & May 4, 2024
Time: 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM
Venue: SRM University-AP Administrative Office
2nd Floor, RK Galleria, Srinivasa Nagar Bank Colony, Mahanadu Signal, Near Sweet Magic Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh

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Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

People of Sudan face food shortage and possible famine

18 in million. The people of Sudan are facing high levels of acute food insecurity. According to estimates, at least 6% of the country's population will face famine. In the worst case, it would be 40% of people between harvests. REUTERS

Capex needed for aluminium industry to clock net-zero emission

2.2 in lakh crore. The Indian aluminium industry would require an additional capital expenditure of nearly ₹2.2 lakh crore to achieve net-zero carbon emission. Renewable power sources could abate 49% of the emissions from the industry. PTI

Number of migrants from U.K. that Rwanda shall accommodate

5,700 Migrants who arrived in the U.K. between January 2022 and June 2023 are liable to have asylum claims deemed inadmissible and be removed to Rwanda. More than 57,000 people arrived in this period. AFP

Pakistan's GDP growth in second quarter ending in June

1 in percentage. The GDP of Pakistan is expected to improve in the second half of the fiscal year. Also, inflation is expected to be 18.5-19.5% in April and reduce to 17.5-18.5% in May, the country's Finance Ministry said in its monthly economic update report. REUTERS

Canada revises work hour limits for international students

24 in hours. International students, including those from India, in Canada, can work off-campus for only up to 24 hours per week from September, according to a rule that will come into effect on Tuesday. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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About the redistribution of wealth

What is the debate surrounding the redistribution of wealth that has piqued interest during the ongoing election campaigns? Where does it fit in the constitutional framework? How has the judiciary ruled on the topic from the start?

EXPLAINER

Rangarajan. R

The story so far:
There have been heated exchanges between the ruling government and the Opposition with respect to the redistribution of wealth during the ongoing election campaign. The Supreme Court has also constituted a nine-judge Bench to interpret the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) with respect to ownership and control of material resources.

What does the Constitution provide?
The Preamble to the Constitution aims to secure to all citizens social and economic justice, liberty and equality. Part III of the Constitution lists down the fundamental rights that guarantee liberty and equality while Part IV contains the DPSP. These are principles that the central and State governments should follow to achieve social and economic justice in our country. Unlike the fundamental rights in Part III, the DPSP is not enforceable in court. They are nevertheless fundamental in the governance of the country. Article 39(b) and (c) in Part IV contain principles that are aimed at securing economic justice. They provide that ownership and control of material resources of the society should be distributed to serve the common good and that the operation of the economic system does not result in concentration of wealth to the common detriment.

What is the historical context?
The Constitution originally guaranteed right to property as a fundamental right under Article 19(1)(f). It provided under Article 31 that the state shall pay compensation in case of acquisition of private property. It is pertinent to note that at the time of independence, the main property rights related to agricultural and other land. The government had to acquire the rights in such estates for carrying out land reforms and construction of public assets. Considering the inadequate resources with the government and in order to provide greater flexibility in acquiring land for public welfare, various amendments were carried out curtailing the right to property. Notable among them are exceptions under Articles 31A, 31B and 31C that are briefly explained in Table 1.

The Supreme Court in various cases has interpreted the relationship between fundamental rights and the DPSP. Most of these cases were against constitutional amendments made by the state that curtailed the right to property that was then a fundamental right. In the *Golak Nath* case (1967), the Supreme Court held that fundamental rights cannot be abridged or diluted to implement DPSP. Finally, in the *Kesavananda Bharati* case (1973), a thirteen-judge Bench of the Supreme Court upheld the validity of Article 31C but made it subject to judicial review. In the *Minerva Mills* case (1980), the Supreme Court ruled that the Constitution exists on a harmonious balance between fundamental rights and DPSP.

In 1978, in order to avoid excessive litigation directly in the Supreme Court by the propertied class, the 44th amendment act omitted right to property as a fundamental right and made it a constitutional right under Article 300A. The right to private property continues to be an important constitutional cum legal right. Any law to acquire private property by the state should be only for a public purpose and provide for adequate compensation.

At the time of independence, the main property rights were related to agricultural and other land. The government had to acquire the rights in such estates for carrying out land reforms and construction of public assets. ISTOCKPHOTO

Exceptions to fundamental rights

Considering the inadequate resources with the government and to provide greater flexibility in acquiring land for public welfare, various amendments were carried out curtailing the right to property. Notable among them are exceptions under Articles 31A, 31B and 31C

Article	Amendment & year	Brief explanation
31A	1st amendment, 1951	Provided that laws made for acquisition of estates etc. shall not be void on the ground that it violated fundamental rights including right to property
31B	1st amendment, 1951	Made laws placed under the Ninth Schedule immune from judicial review on the grounds of violating any fundamental right. In Coelho case (2007), the SC held that laws placed in Ninth Schedule after April 1973 would be subject to judicial review
31C	25th amendment, 1971	Provided primacy to the DPSP under Articles 39(b) and (c). Laws made to fulfil these principles shall not be void on the ground that it violated fundamental rights including right to property

What is the current debate?
Indian governments in the first four decades after independence followed a "socialistic model" of economy. There were many laws made by the Centre and States to acquire land from zamindars and big landlords for public purpose. The economic policies resulted in the nationalisation of banking and insurance, extremely high rates of direct taxes (even up to 97%), estate duty on inheritance, tax on wealth etc. There were also regulations that placed restrictions on growth of private enterprise like The Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act, 1969 (MRTP Act). The rationale behind these measures during those times was to reduce inequality and redistribute wealth among the poorer sections who constituted majority of the population. However, such measures stifled growth and also resulted in the concealment of income/wealth. Taxes like estate duty and wealth tax generated revenue that was much less than the cost incurred in administering them.

The nineties saw the country move from a closed economy towards liberalisation, globalisation and privatisation. A new industrial policy was unveiled in July 1991 with the objective of empowering market forces, improving efficiency and rectifying deficiencies in the country's industrial structure. The MRTP Act was repealed and replaced with the Competition Act, 2002 and income tax rates were reduced considerably. Estate duty was abolished in 1985 and wealth tax in 2016.

The market driven economy has resulted in additional resources for the government that has helped in bringing people out of abject poverty. This economic system, nonetheless, has also resulted in growing inequality. A report by the World Inequality Lab states that the top 10% of the country's population have a share of 65% and 57% of the wealth and income respectively as of 2022-23. The bottom 50% on the other hand have a meagre share of 6.5% and 15% of the wealth and income respectively.

The manifesto for the current Lok Sabha elections of the Congress, the principal Opposition party, promises various measures for the poorer sections including payment of ₹1 lakh per annum to a woman from every poor family. Rahul Gandhi had also mentioned in his campaign that there would be a financial survey to ascertain the distribution of wealth among the people in the country and address the issue of inequality. The ruling party campaigners led by the Prime Minister have targeted the Opposition on this matter. They claim that the Opposition, if voted to power, would bring back inheritance tax laws that would tax even the poorer sections. The Supreme Court meanwhile has constituted a nine-judge Bench to interpret whether material resources under Article 39(b) include private resources as well.

What can be the way forward?
It is not just in India, but growing inequality is a worldwide problem of a liberalised open-market economic system. However, it is the responsibility of the government to protect the interest of the poorer classes who are most dependant on the state machinery for their livelihood. At the same time past policies of extremely high tax rates, estate duty, wealth tax etc., did not achieve their desired goals. Instead, they only led to concealment of income and wealth. Innovation and growth should not be curtailed but the benefits of growth should reach all sections especially the marginalised. The policies may vary and need to be framed after adequate debate in line with current economic models. The underlying principle to be achieved nevertheless remains the same – economic justice for all as enshrined in our Constitution.

Rangarajan R is a former IAS officer and author of 'Polity Simplified'. He currently trains civil service aspirants at 'Officers IAS Academy'. Views expressed are personal.

The Gist

The Preamble to the Constitution aims to secure to all citizens social and economic justice, liberty and equality. Part III of the Constitution lists down the fundamental rights that guarantee liberty and equality while Part IV contains the Directive Principles of State Policy that talks about ownership and control of material resources. These are principles that the central and State governments should follow to achieve social and economic justice in our country.

The Supreme Court in various cases has interpreted the relationship between fundamental rights and the DPSP. In 1978, in order to avoid excessive litigation directly in the Supreme Court by the propertied class, the 44th amendment act omitted the right to property as a fundamental right and made it a constitutional right under Article 300A.

The Supreme Court has now constituted a nine-judge Bench to interpret the Directive Principles of State Policy

The Hindu Education Plus Career Counselling from May 11

It will provide guidance on UPSC exam, CET and NEET counselling, while also providing career guidance on courses in Arts, Science, Commerce, Law, Fashion Designing, and many more

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The 22nd edition of The Hindu Education Plus Career Counselling 2024 will be held at eight locations in Karnataka from May 11.

The event will provide guidance on the UPSC exam, CET counselling, and NEET Counselling from the Karnataka Examination Authority while also providing career guidance on courses in Arts, Science, Commerce, Law, Fashion Designing, Journalism, Animation, Performing Arts, Management, Engineering, Medicine, and Architecture.

During the event, students and parents will be able to connect with experts and educational institutions. Registration will be between 9 a.m. and 9.30 a.m, and the event from 9.30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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The Hindu EducationPlus Career Counselling 2024

Place	Date	Venue	Address
Mangaluru	11/05/2024	Geetha S.M. Shetty Hall	Ramakrishna College, Bunts Hostel Circle, Mangaluru
Bengaluru Central	11/05/2024	Sri Jagadguru Renukacharya College of Science, Arts and Commerce	9, Race Course Road, Ananda Rao Circle, Bengaluru
Raichur	11/05/2024	Navodaya Institute of Technology Auditorium	Navodaya Nagar, Bijanagera Road, Raichur
Mysuru	11/05/2024	Sahukar Chennaiah Auditorium	Vidyavardhaka College of Engineering, P.B. No. 206, Gokulam III Stage, Mysuru
Vijayapura	11/05/2024	BLDECET	BLDEA's V.P. Dr. P.G. Halakatti College of Engineering and Technology, Ashram Road, Adarsh Nagar
Bidar	18/05/2024	Sri Poojya Channa Basava Pattadevaru Rang Mandir	Near district stadium, Bidar
Tumakuru	19/05/2024	Birla Auditorium	Siddaganga Institute of Technology, Tumakuru
Kalaburagi	19/05/2024	Poojya Doddappa Appa Sabha Bhavan	Poojay Doddappa Appa Sabha Bhavan, Sharana Basava University, Kalaburagi

Silver Sponsors are Christ University, JSS Science & Technology University, JSS Academy of Higher Education & Research, Vidyavardhaka College of Engineering, Indian Institute of Fashion Technology, Soundarya Institutions, SRM IST Ramapuram Campus, Chanakya University, CMR University, East Point Group of Institution, Karnataka State Open University, Malnad College of Engineering, IIBS, Kammavari Sangha Institute of Technology, St Joseph Engineering College, and Praxis Tech School. Associate Sponsors are SDM Dharwad, Shaheen Independent PU College, Khaja Bandanawaz University, Sharnbasva University, KLE Technological University, Visvesvaraya Technological University, BLDE Association Vijayapura, Karnataka Bank, Navkis College of Engineering.

Regional Sponsor is Parivarthana Business School.

For details, contact: 9845095781 / 9448160126 / 9448871815. Entry is free. All participating students will get career counselling book free.

HC clears man from charge of abetting suicide of assistant parish priest of church near Udupi

FROM THE COURT

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka has cleared a man from the charge of allegedly driving the then assistant parish priest of a church near Udupi to death by saying "go hang yourself" during a telephonic conversation phone after learning that the priest had "an affair" with his wife.

"Human mind is an enigma and the task of unravelling the mystery of human mind can never be accomplished," the High Court observed, while also pointing out that "the reason for the priest to end his life may be myriad, one of which could be the factum of him having illicit relationship with the wife of the petitioner, despite being the priest of the church."

Charge sheet

The police had filed charge sheet against the 54-year-old petitioner from Pilar village in Kaup taluk of Udupi district under Section 306 (abetment of suicide) of the Indian Penal Code in connection with the death of Fr. Mahesh D'Souza, 36, who was the assistant parish priest of Our Lady of Health Church, Shirva, and the principal of Don Bosco CBSE School, who ended his life in the school principal's chamber on October 11, 2019.

Agony of husband

Pointing out that the charge sheet was filed on the sole basis of the statement allegedly made by the petitioner to the priest during his telephonic conversation, voice record of which was retrieved during the probe, the High Court said that petitioner's words "could be hurling of abuses or the agony of a husband being blunted out for the reason that the priest had an affair with his wife and that had just then come to light."

Applying the principles laid down by the apex court on requirement of "positive act of accused to instigate commission of suicide", the High Court said: "What would unmistakably emerge is that the petitioner, the sole accused and husband of the lady with whom the deceased priest had certain relationship, had blunt out his anger and had uttered words "go and hang yourself" cannot mean that it would become the ingredients of Section 107 (abetment of a thing) of the IPC for it to become an offence under Section 306 of the IPC."

It was alleged in the charge sheet that the priest had ended his life fearing for his image and prestige as the petitioner had threatened to tarnish his image for having illicit relationship with his wife, who was associated with the church and the school activities.

Protests over death

The death of the priest had witnessed several protests demanding impartial and speedy probe into the unnatural, which some had suspected to be a murder. Initially complaints were registered against some of his colleagues before the police filed the charge sheet against the petitioner, who was then member of a nearby gram panchayat.

(Those in distress or those having suicidal tendencies can call Arogya Sahayavani Ph.: 104 for help.)

Truck driver killed while replacing deflated tyre

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 45-year-old truck driver was crushed to death under the truck while replacing a deflated tyre in Anekal on Monday night.

The deceased Rohith, a resident of Doddagubbi, was driving a fertilizer-laden truck and parked it on the roadside to replace a deflated wheel.

While he was removing the tyre after placing the jack, a speeding bike rider failed to notice the truck and crashed into it. As a result, the jack slipped and Rohith was crushed under the truck, killing him on the spot.

The bike rider, identified as Manjunath, also sustained severe injuries. The truck driver failed to put on the reflector and there was no light in the area leading to the accident, the police said.

Car crashes into drain

In another accident, a 19-year-old driver was killed and his friend injured when the SUV they were travelling in fell into the roadside drain near Nijagal village on the Pune-Bengaluru highway in Nelamangala on Monday night.

The deceased Sachin, a native of Rajasthan, was working in a private factory in Dabaspet.

No more migration opportunity for medical students from this year

In the earlier regulations, National Medical Commission gave the opportunity of migration to other medical institutions. FILE PHOTO

Jayanth R.
BENGALURU

There will no more be an opportunity for migration for medical students to any other medical institution from this academic year. The new regulation has drawn criticism from students.

In the earlier regulations, the National Medical Commission (NMC) gave the opportunity of migration to other medical institutions. A candidate was eligible for migration only after qualifying for the first year MBBS examination. The migration could be granted on any genuine ground like medical issue, having a single parent and others, on the basis of availability of vacancy in the college to where migration was sought. The migration at that juncture was restricted to 5% of the sanctioned intake of the college and it was not permitted on any ground within the same city. But, migration during the clinical course of study was not allowed on any ground.

New rules

However, the Undergraduate Medical Education Board (UGMEB) of the NMC brought in the Graduate Medical Education Regulations-2023. "No student designated to a medical institution, notwithstanding anything stating in these regulations, shall seek migration to any other medical institution," the regulation said.

"Instead of directly implementing the regulations of the NMC, the State government can make some modifications. It was good that MBBS students were allowed to migrate. The old rule was more friendly to students who were physically challenged, those suffering from serious illness, or when their parents were transferred to distant towns. However, restricting migration will cause problems for these students," a medical student said.

The parent of a medical student said: "Compared to private colleges, the fee structure of government medical colleges is less. In some government colleges, the old rule allowed admission for the medical courses for the seats remaining vacant due to various reasons through migration. But now, students have to continue in the same colleges where he or she has got a seat according to the new regulations."

'Helpless'

B.L. Sujatha Rathod, Director of Directorate of Medical Education, expressed helplessness. "The NMC has restricted the migration through the Graduate Medical Education Regulations-2023. Some parents have requested the State Medical Directorate provide migration facility for their children. But, NMC does not allow it and we can't consider it on any ground. We can't do anything. Students should complete their medical course and internship wherever they get admission."

Mangaluru airport becomes 'silent'

The Hindu Bureau
MANGALURU

The airlines operating at the Mangaluru International Airport have stopped making announcements over the public address (PA) system. MIA has thus become a silent airport since Monday. Only emergency information will be shared over the PA system, henceforth.

This important change allows passengers to enjoy peace and tranquility while waiting for their flight, or catch up with their favourite pastime, chat with their loved ones, read, binge on web shows, or simply focus on urgent work. Passengers can get all their flight-related information, including changes in gate or delay in departure or arrival, on the Flight Information Display System (FIDS). The airport has placed FIDS at vantage points, both inside and outside the airport, which gives updated information on the arrival and departure of flights.

There are large display boards at the departure and arrival areas to provide timely and updated information.

THE HINDU
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SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY G2C
E-Tender Notice No: 12-MYS 2023-24
Dated: 25-04-2024
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders for the following work:

Item of work	Approx. Value
Spring Inserted Reusable nut (Tender No. L9236461)	Rs. 33,00,000/-

Last date for submission of bids:
Upto 10:30 Hrs. on 06-05-2024
For details log on : www.ireps.gov.in
Keep visiting the website for any corrigendum till closing date
Senior Divisional Materials Manager
PUB/38/AAD/PRB/SWR/2024-25 Mysuru
South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | SWRRLY

PUBLIC NOTICE
The public is hereby notified that my client **A. SURESH** intends to enter into a transaction for purchasing the immovable property more fully described in the Schedule and hereinafter referred to as the '**Scheduled Property**' from its owner: **Sri. RAJENDRA H.K, S/o Krishnegowda, residing at No. 38, 21st Cross, Rangaiah Layout, BSK 3rd Stage, Ittamadu, Bangalore, Karnataka – 560 085.**
If any person/s have any manner of right, title, interest, claim or charge or lien over the Schedule property or otherwise have any lawful objection/s for the sale of the Schedule property by the aforesaid owner, they are hereby called upon to file their objections in writing, along with the supporting legal documents on which they rely, with the undersigned, within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. Objection/s received thereafter will not be binding on my client.
SCHEDULED PROPERTY
Property owned by Sri. Rajendra H.K: All that piece and parcel of the developed Residential Old Site No.14, Khata No.2/3, formed in Sy. No.2/3, Municipal New No.6, now comes under the limits of BBMP Old Ward No.55, New Ward No.183, assigned as PID No.55-502-6, situated at 4 th Cross, Banashankari 3 rd Stage, Ittamadu Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk, Bengaluru, measuring East to West 30 feet and North to South 40 feet together with building constructed thereon and bounded by:
East by: Site No.13; **West by:** Site No.15; **North by:** others Property; **South by:** Road.
Sd/- J.P.Darshan, Advocate
No. 29/11, 1st Floor, Mount Joy Road, 1st Main Road, Hanumanthnagar, Bangalore-560019
Ph- 7760487171

PUBLIC NOTICE
My client intending to purchase the property from **SRI.SHESHAGIRI.M.L** in respect of Immovable Vacant Site bearing Khaneshumari No. 106/3, situated at **Puttenahalli Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, Bangalore,** measuring East to West 30 feet and North to South 40 Feet, total measuring 1**200 Sq.ft.,** which is more fully described in the schedule herein under.
Any person or persons having/asserting any right title or interest/claims or intending to oppose the purchase in any manner may file their objections to the undersigned within Ten days from the publication of Notice hereof with documentary proof where after no such claims will be entertained and my client will proceed with the purchase of the said property.
Y. Sowmya Yadav, Advocate
Samvruddhi Legal, # 83, Ground Floor, 5th 'A' Cross, 21st Main, J.P. Nagar 2nd Phase, Bangalore-78. **M : 9916343921**

PUBLIC NOTICE
Public are hereby informed that my clients are intending to Purchase the properties more fully described at Item No.1 & 2 in the Schedule hereunder from its respective owners being **Mr. Aghan Dixit Ravindranath Jois**, S/o Mr. Ravindra Jois and **Mrs. Malathi Ravindranath**, W/o. Mr. Ravindra Jois, who have represented that they have a clear and marketable title to the same. Any person/s, financial institutions, statutory authorities or any other persons/s representing any private or public companies or any partnership firm or any society who claim any right, title or interest of any nature in or any lien, charge or enforceable right in relation to the Schedule Property and/or has any objections of any nature to the aforesaid transaction should lodge such claim and/or objections in writing to the undersigned, within Fifteen (15) days from the date of issue of this notice with documentary evidence failing which, it will be presumed that no valid claims or objections subsist and any objection/s or claims made thereafter will not be binding on my clients and my clients would proceed to complete the transaction with the present owners thereof subject to compliance with other statutory and legal formalities.
SCHEDULE PROPERTY
Item No.1
All that piece and parcel of agricultural dry land bearing Sy. No. 3/7, measuring 23 Guntas of Venkateshpura Village, Doddabelavangala Hobli, Doddaballapura Taluk, Bangalore Rural District and bounded on the:
East by : Land in Survey No.3/6.
West by : Land in Survey No.3/8
North by : Land belonging to Nanjundappa
South by : Road
Item No.2
All that piece and parcel of agricultural dry land bearing Sy. No. 3/8, measuring 29 Guntas of Venkateshpura Village, Doddabelavangala Hobli, Doddaballapura Taluk, Bangalore Rural District and bounded on the:
East by : Land in Survey No.3/7
West by : Land belonging to Shivashankaraiah
North by : Land belonging to Nanjundappa
South by : Road
B. R. Ravi Kumar
Advocates
No.537, 10th 'B' Cross, Yelahanka New Town, **Bangalore - 560 064**

KARNATAKA NEERAVARI NIGAM LIMITED
(A government of Karnataka Enterprises)
Office of the Executive Engineer, Karnataka Neeravari Nigam Limited, No.4 BRLBC Division, Bhadravathi.
No: EE/KNNL/ BDN-4/TA/PB-1/4701 Bhadra / Tender Notification No: 01/2024-25: Dated: 25.04.2024
SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
(THROUGH E-PROCUREMENT PORTAL ONLY)
Percentage Tenders by e-procurement portal in the prescribed form is invited by the undersigned on behalf of Managing Director, KNNL, Bangalore from the eligible Contractor under the Head of Account 4701 Bhadra. The No. of work is 01. The approximate cost of amount put to tender varies from Rs.637.88 Lakhs. The amount of EMD is Rs.9,57,000/- (by e-portal) contactors can access and submission of completed e-tendering documents from 30.04.2024 to 07.05.2024 upto 17.30 hours in the website http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in Technical Bid will be opened on 08.05.2024 at 17.30 hours. After obtaining approval of technical bid from competent authority, the financial bid will be opened. Stipulated period for completion of work 08 Months (Including monsoon). For more conditions and details visit website http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in. OR at undersigned in all working days during office hours on telephone No.08282-271063/ 8660573513.
Sd/- Executive Engineer, KNNL, No.4 BRLBC Division, Bhadravathi.
DIPR/smg/No.0404/ksmca/24-2504

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY G2C
E-Tender Notice No.Y/E.29/2024-25/08
Dated: 23-04-2024
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders forthe following work:

Description of work	Approx. Value
(Re-Tender) Conducting LV safety audit along with fire safety audit at Divisional Office Mysuru, Railway Hospital Mysuru, Mysuru Railway Station, Davangere & Shivamogga Town Railway Stations.	Rs. 20,24,549.60

Last date for submission of bids :
Upto 11:00 Hrs. on 14-05-2024
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer
PUB/37/AAD/PRB/SWR/2024-25 Mysuru
South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | SWRRLY

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY G2C
E-Tender Notice No. B/TRD.2024-25/01
Dated: 23-04-2024
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders for the following work:

Name of work	Approx. Value
[i]OHE modifications for improving the profile and reliability of OHE due to slewing and raising of SE in curves in Mysuru-Bengaluru & Bengaluru -Dharmavaram section. [ii]OHE modification works due to platform extension at Nayandahalli station towards Mysuru end. [iii] OHE modification in connection with construction of pit line 150 mtrs length at Rd-01 SGT yard. [iv] OHE modifications related to proposed construction of tower car shed at Bidadi and Mandya TRD Depots. [v] Provision of Auxillary Transformer for interlocking of LC's [LC No.31/Km 34 (Bidadi-Ramanagaram), LC No 34/km 40 (Bidadi-Ramanagaram), LC No.46/km 78 (Gauribidanur-Viduraswatha), LC No.50/km 58 (Channapatna-Settihalli), LC No.24/Km 26 (Hejjala-Bidadi)]. [vi] Provision of Automatic signalling between Bengaluru-Yasvantpur-Yelahanka Section.	[i]Rs. 2,41,17,098.16

Last date for submission of bids:
Upto 15:00 Hrs. on 15-05-2024
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer
Traction Distribution, Bengaluru
PUB/36/AAD/PRB/SWR/2024-25
South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | SWRRLY

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is represented to the undersigned that, Mr. Nasir Masood, son of Mr. Masood Kareem, is the owner of the Ofice Unit No. 102, bearing BBMP Khatha No. 74/12, on the Level - I (Mezzanine Floor) of the commercial building known as "Prestige Delta", having a super built-up area of 1867 square feet, together with 842 square feet of undivided share, right, title and interest in the composite land situated at St. Marks Road, Richmond Town, Bengaluru having acquired the same by virtue of the Deed of Sale dated 04/07/2014 executed by Mrs. Yasmin Ahmed Ranney, represented by her duly constituted power of attorney holder, Mr. Shuja Ahmed registered vide Document No. HLS-1-01638/2014-15 of Book I, stored in C.D. No. HLSD101 in the office of the Sub-Registrar, Halasuru, Bengaluru. It is represented that the original Power of Attorney dated 03/11/2013 executed by Mrs. Yasmin Ahmed Ranney in favour of Mr. Shuja Ahmed is lost/misplaced and the same is not traceable. Any person/s in possession of the aforesaid original document shall return th same to the undersigned.
Place: Bengaluru
Date: 30/04/2024.
sd/-
Vinay K.s.
Advocate,
102, Ground Floor, Rams Infantry Manor, No. 70, Infantry Road, Bengaluru - 560 001, Ph. 080-41238367.

PUBLIC NOTICE
NOTICE is hereby given that our client intends to transact with the lands totally admeasuring 48.705 acres situated at Utthanapalli Village, Soolagiri Taluk, Krishnagiri District (morefully described in Schedule hereunder "Schedule Property"), from its present owners viz., Mr.Sayed Farhan Hussian & Mr.Sayed Adnan Hussian.
Any person or entities (including bank/societies/Financial Institutions), other than the owners mentioned above, having any right/ title/ interest of any kind whatsoever including mortgage/ charge/ claim/ encumbrance/ demand over the Schedule Property whether by way of sale, transfer, assignment, exchange, charge, encumbrance, tenancy, sub-tenancy, lease, sub-lease, license, mortgage, inheritance, share, gift, devise, lien, maintenance, bequest, easement, trust, covenant, possession, maintenance, FSI consumption, development rights, or otherwise of any nature whatsoever, to or upon the Schedule Property must lodge their claim/s with the undersigned, together with complete documentary evidence/proof thereof, within 21 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which, such rights, if any, would be considered as abandoned/waived & it will be presumed that no person(s) or entities other than the owners or their successors/assignees mentioned above, has any right / title / claim and/or interest in/to the Schedule Property and that our client is free to transact the Schedule Property.
SCHEDULE PROPERTY
All that piece and parcel of lands totally admeasuring 48.705 acres situated at Utthanapalli Village, Soolagiri Taluk, Krishnagiri District comprised in the following survey numbers:

S. Nos.	Extent (in acres)	S. Nos.	Extent (in acres)	S. Nos.	Extent (in acres)	S. Nos.	Extent (in acres)
763/2	1.57	822/3B	1.48	828/3	0.36	881/1B1	1.48
764/1	0.20	823	1.43	828/4	0.65	881/1B2	0.89
764/2	0.58	824/1	1.41	828/5	1.54	881/1B3	0.22
764/3	0.37	824/2	1.37	829	2.74	881/1B4	0.89
765/1	0.65	825/1	1.36	830/1	0.98	881/1B5	0.69
765/2	1.47	825/2	1.58	830/2	0.75	881/1C1	0.22
766	1.91	826/1	1.05	830/3	0.64	881/1C2	0.98
768/1	1.495	826/2	0.70	830/4	0.67	881/2	2.00
768/2	1.84	826/3	0.43	830/5	0.21	882/2	0.28
769/1	1.53	827	1.46	830/6	0.30	883/1	0.54
769/2	1.48	828/1	0.42	831	1.025	884/1	2.47
822/2A	0.75	828/2	0.47	881/1A	0.025	884/2	1.15

For and on behalf of our clients
FOXMANDAL & ASSOCIATES
SOLICITORS & ADVOCATES
FM House, No. 302, Anna Salai,Teynampet, Chennai – 600 006
Ph: 044 - 2436 1030 & 044 - 4305 1000 p.jayaprakash@foxmandal.in

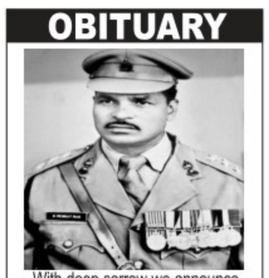
OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

OBITUARY

S.PARTHASARATHY
82 Years, TVS & Sons (Retd), Madurai
Attained Acharyan Thiruvadi on 29.04.2024
Deeply mourned by
Wife, Son, Daughter, Son-in-law & Grandsons
Cell: 79960 60845

OBITUARY



With deep sorrow we announce the demise of
HONY CAPT K VENKAT RAO (MEG)
who breathed his last on 30th April 2024 at 07.35 a.m.
Deeply mourned by:
Gayatri, Suresh, Swetha
Tarun, Ishu and Arya.
Contact: 96770 45731.

What are the behavioural patterns of fans of Tamil movie stars on social media?

Movie stars with political aspirations are making the leap from acting to political roles with their fan bases holding the potential to transform into potent political entities; the extensive activity of such fans on social media is notable owing to their ability to influence public discourse

Vignesh Karthik KR
Ajay Chandra Vasagam U

Potent group: Fans utilise their devotion to film stars and cinematic stories to participate in and influence politics, showcasing a distinctive fusion of cultural loyalty and political activism. THE HINDU

In Tamil Nadu, cinema serves a role beyond entertainment – it significantly influences and merges with the political sphere. The digital expressions of Tamil cinema fans on Twitter have illuminated a compelling dialogue between filmic content and political engagement. As movie stars with political aspirations make the leap from acting to political roles, their fan bases hold the potential to transform into potent political entities. The extensive activity of such fans on social media is notable owing to their ability to influence public discourse. The appointment of a hitherto online personality who had a case filed against him by a senior journalist as a spokesperson of the Tamil Vetri Kazhagam party founded by actor Vijay is a case in point. This article delves into the narratives that the fans of popular Tamil movie stars subscribe to on social media.

We use Twitter to study this as it is a representative platform suitable to gauge the effect, albeit it may not give the exact picture of the magnitude. By analysing trending Twitter topics related to Tamil cinema and politics, we explore how fans utilise their devotion to film stars and cinematic stories to participate in and influence politics, showcasing a distinctive fusion of cultural loyalty and political activism.

This research was jointly conducted by the Social Media Networks and (Dis)information Research Group at King's College London and the Populous Empowerment Network India, a research organisation based in Chennai. We systematically collected the top five Twitter hashtags trending every half-hour within the 'India' geography from November 26, 2018, to December 17, 2022. Each day, hashtags were ranked based on their duration of trend, and a descending order list was compiled to determine the top hashtags for further analysis. Out of the total 6,138 hashtags collected, 342 related to Tamil Nadu were specifically identified and further classified into political (115) and non-political (227) themes. This section of the study, encompassing accounts and hashtags, is confined to Tamil Nadu, and all percentages and numbers are to be interpreted within this regional context. Detailed tweet data – including usernames, engagement metrics, timestamps, IDs, and URLs – associated with these hashtags were extracted using the Twitter API for academic purposes.

Segregation of accounts

To better understand the relationship matrix between fan accounts and the political hashtags, we grouped the fan accounts into groups, namely – 'Anti-Ajith', 'Anti-Vijay', 'Pro-Suriya', 'Pro-Ajith', 'Pro-Dhanush', 'Pro-Kamal', 'Pro-Rajini', 'Pro-Simbu', 'Pro-Sivakarthikeyan', 'Pro-Vijay', 'Pro-Vikram', and others. Likewise, we grouped the political hashtags into 'Pro-NTK', 'Pro-INC', 'Pro-DMK', 'Pro-BJP', 'Anti-NTK', 'Anti-INC', 'Anti-DMK', 'Anti-BJP', 'Anti-AIADMK', 'Anti-State-Govt', and 'Anti-State-Govt-from-May-21'.

Fan accounts were mapped using actor hashtags that they frequently interacted with. These fan accounts were then studied for their interactions with political hashtags. To compare the influence of certain 'fan bases' in the Twitter political trends, let us take a look at how the movie fan accounts of different actors share the Twitter space based on their interaction with certain hashtags.

Pattern of engagement

The structure of engagement among fans of different stars, when deductively categorised into dominants (with the most reach), fans (intermediary users with moderate reach), and regulars (those with the least engagement) highlights how some actors, like Rajinikanth, have a broader organic reach directly to fans, compared to others who rely more on intermediaries to amplify their message. This suggests differences in how fan clubs and communities form around each star and engage with political content on Twitter.

Among the political hashtags that trended in the study period, the hashtags that supported the DMK showed the highest number of occurrences. It was close to 24% of the total number of political hashtags. Tamil actor Vijay had the most number of fan accounts during the study period.

Movie fans contribute significantly, representing 55.12% of total participants in political hashtags. The two largest participants per hashtag in our study are those that are aligned with the BJP – 'Pro-BJP' hashtags, and the hashtags that are against the DMK – 'Anti-DMK' hashtags. This observation suggests potential external funding. While on the other hand, the hashtags that favoured the DMK –'Pro-DMK', and the hashtags that were against the BJP – 'Anti-BJP', showed very low participants per hashtag.

Since the DMK-led State government assumed power in May 2021, the participants per hashtag number for the anti-State government trends went up by 35.43%. This could indicate the presence of funding by other parties that do not align with the DMK. This also suggests dissatisfaction among the people with the governance of the State government regardless of the ruling party (AIADMK and DMK). But judging by the sheer scale of the participants per hashtag, it could be a funded effort by parties that are not in favour of regional/State powers.

Dominance of critics

The data seems to suggest there is a dominance of anti-Party tweets, for both the DMK as well as the BJP. This shows the substantial presence of critics on the platform. This is followed by the strong presence of supporters for each party – an active base of supporters. The discussions/trends are also heavily focused on parties other than the DMK and the BJP, including the AIADMK, the NTK, and the INC.

While the data collected is spread over a large timeline, it is important to consider external factors such as ongoing events and political developments that have an influence on Twitter trends.

Our observation on the prevalence of political messaging and the participation of movie fan bases in the political world show a very balanced picture. Upon drawing out standard deviations of actors' fan bases across the various political trends, we find the variance to be minimal. Nonetheless, the following insights were particularly intriguing: 14.78% of politically interested (interacted with political hashtags) Kamal fan accounts participated in Pro-DMK hashtags – this is the highest amongst the major actors fan accounts, closely followed by Ajith fan accounts (14.57%). On the other hand, a remarkable 17.95% of politically interested Rajinikanth fan accounts participated in Pro-BJP hashtags. This participation is huge, overshadowing the second place contender, which has only single-digit representation.

During the period of study, cinema surpassed even politics as the most discussed subject. The aforementioned findings provide a slightly clearer answer or response to the frequently asked question or prevailing perception regarding the political success of movie actors in Tamil Nadu, as observed from the perspective of fan activity. Amidst the vibrant film and celebrity fan base in the State, their political involvement is an extension of the broader political ethos of dissent and debate that is pervasive in Tamil Nadu and is mirrored in the State's cinema.

But, it is pertinent to note that while social media metrics such as hits, likes, and clicks certainly help create a narrative or build an opinion, elections are still primarily fought at the grassroots level – such as booths. It might be premature to ascertain the extent to which an active social media following would actually translate into votes. However, as argued elsewhere, control over discourse, access to resources, and a motivated cadre of personnel are crucial for electoral forays and political success. This requires vision complemented by political labour.

Vignesh Karthik KR is a postdoctoral research fellow of Indian and Indonesian politics at the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies. Ajay Chandra Vasagam U is a researcher at the Social Media Networks and (Dis)information Research Group, King's College London. *We acknowledge the support extended by Regan K and team.*

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

May 1 is observed as International Workers' Day. Here is a quiz on the same

Sindhu Nagaraj

QUESTION #1
Why was May 1 chosen to observe this day?

QUESTION #2
This was the aftermath of a bombing that took place at a labour demonstration, which is related to the answer to the first question. This incident is considered significant to the origin of the International Workers' Day. What is it called?

QUESTION #3
This was a social movement to regulate the length of a working day, preventing excesses and abuses of working time. Spain became the first country to introduce this by law for factory and fortification workers. What was this movement called?

QUESTION #4
Even though the majority of countries observe International Workers' Day on May 1, the United States also celebrates Labour Day to recognize the American labour movement. This is celebrated on which date every year?

QUESTION #5
Which erstwhile political party in India first organised the May Day celebration in India?

Visual question: In which part of India is this statue located? What is it called? The statue also commemorates an event connected to the International Workers' Day. What is it?

Answers to the previous day's daily quiz:
1. Which famous American jazz musician mooted the idea for an International Jazz Day and when was it first observed? **Ans: Herbie Hancock and 2012**
2. Which African city is the Global Host for 2024 the International Jazz Day **Ans: Tangier, Morocco**
3. Characterised by heavy mode modulation and few chord changes, which type of jazz had its pioneers in Miles Davis and John Coltrane? **Ans: Modal Jazz**
4. *Bird*, the 1988 biographical film, is about which famous jazz musician? **Ans: Charlie Parker**
5. What is the claim to fame of 'Livery Stable Blues' released in February 1917? **Ans:First commercial jazz recording**
6. Which musicians were nicknamed 'High Priest of Bop' and 'King of the Clarinet'? **Ans: Thelonious Monk and Artie Shaw**
7.Whose autobiography is titled 'Lady Sings the Blues' and adapted into a 1972 movie? **Ans: Billie Holiday.**
Visual Question: Identify this legendary singer dubbed the 'the Lady of Swing'. **Ans: Ella Fitzgerald**

Early Birds
Prashant Nain – Rajmohan V – Jyot Prakash Gulati – Niharbala Behera – Sadhan Kumar Panda

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subrahmanian

Feasible (S.K. Bhatnagar, New Delhi)

'Feasible' means 'practicable, easily and conveniently done.' *It is a feasible idea. His proposals are good, but we must carry out a feasibility study.* Fowler says of 'feasible': 'Its proper sense is practicable, capable of being done, accomplished, or carried out' (OED). It means the same as 'possible' where that might be ambiguous. A thunderstorm is possible (not feasible). A counter-revolution is possible – (a) one may happen for all we know, or (b) we can bring one about if we choose to. If (b) is the meaning, 'feasible' is better than 'possible' because it cannot properly bear sense (a) and therefore obviates ambiguity.

Fowler is against the use of 'feasible' in the sense of 'reasonable, likely, possible.' But more and more writers are using the word in the sense of 'likely, possible.' Here is a sentence from T.S. Eliot's 'The Humanism of Irving Babbitt': "I am not here concerned with the question whether such a 'humanistic' civilisation ... is or is not *desirable*: only with the question whether it is '*feasible*'." The use of the word in the sense of 'possible' still attracts criticism. The latest edition of the Concise Oxford Dictionary records 'likely, probable' as one of the meanings of '*feasible*' and says it is disputed.

Go for (P. K. Bannerjee, Jamshedpur)

'Go for' has several meanings depending on the context. 'Go for somebody or something' means 'to be attracted by, like very much.' *He goes for ice cream. She does not go much for Western music. I don't go for TV news.* It also means 'to attack'. *They went for the thief with sticks and swords.*

It can also be used figuratively. *He went for the Finance Minister over his new proposals.* When you say that what you have said about someone or thing goes for another person or thing, it means that it applies to the second person or thing. *What is said about my boss goes for your boss also. There is a lot of corruption in this State. That goes for most other States also.*

'Go for something or somebody' also means 'to fetch something or somebody.' *Shall I go for a doctor? She has gone for some fresh vegetables.* 'To go for something' also means (a) 'to choose something' (b) 'to attempt to have or achieve something'. *I will go for coffee.* When you say that something is going for you, you mean that you are in an advantageous position. *He is amazingly lucky, Everything is going for him at the moment.*

Word of the day

Blight:
a disease or injury of plants marked by the formation of lesions, withering, and death of parts; something that frustrates plans or hopes

Synonyms: plague, smite, afflict, blemish, blotch

Usage: *The apple trees were blighted by fungus. The expanding urban sprawl is a blight on the countryside*

International Phonetic Alphabet: /blaɪt/

Pronunciation: bit.ly/blightnew

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

Sexual harassment case: SIT summons Revanna, Prajwal

The notice attains significance as Prajwal is not in the country and is said to have flown to Europe on April 27, hours before the State government decided to form an SIT to probe the scandal

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

AAP members staging a protest against Prajwal Revanna in Bengaluru on Tuesday. SUDHAKARA JAIN

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the alleged sex scandal involving several explicit videos of Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna has now issued notices to him and his father and former Minister H.D. Revanna. The father and son have been asked to appear before the SIT for questioning. However, no date has been mentioned.

The notice has been issued in the sexual harassment case registered at Holenarasipur Town Police Station (107/2024) on April 28, in which a former cook at the Revanna household lodged a complaint that the father-son duo had sexually harassed her while she worked there.

The notice attains significance as Prajwal Revanna is not in the country and is said to have flown to Europe on April 27 morning, hours before the State government decided to form an SIT to probe the alleged sex scandal.

Speaking to media persons on Monday, Mr H.D. Revanna had claimed that his son had not fled the country but had left on a pre-scheduled trip abroad. "When he left, he did not know that there would be an FIR against him and an SIT formed. We will not run away and will fight it legally. He will come when the SIT calls him," he had said.

Sources said the notice served to Prajwal Revanna is only a first step, and the next course of action would depend on how he responds to it. If he doesn't return to the country and present himself to repeated summons, he may be declared an absconder and a lookout notice issued against him. Meanwhile, sources said the father and son may move court seeking anticipatory bail.

Meanwhile, SIT officials are working on identifying more victims in the videos that are being circulated. Sources said they had identified some, but none had yet approached the SIT and recorded their statements, which is crucial to the probe.

The Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights has written to SIT chief B.K. Singh, Additional Director General of Police, Criminal Investigation Department (CID), seeking to know if there are any victims who are minors and submit to the Commission a report. "In the FIR filed against the accused, the complainant has said that the accused misbehaved with her daughter over a video call. There are suspicions that there may be victims who are minors," the letter from KSPCR said.

Former driver of Revanna family releases video statement

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA

Karthik, who has worked as a driver for Prajwal Revanna's family for over 15 years, has said that he will submit video proof to the SIT in the sex scandal case. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

A person, said to have worked for former Minister H.D. Revanna's family as a driver, has said that he will submit video documents with regard to allegations against Lok Sabha member Prajwal Revanna to the Special Investigation Team, constituted by the State government.

In a video statement that he released from an unknown place on Tuesday, Karthik said that he had worked as a driver for Revanna's family for over 15 years. He left the job last year following differences with the former Minister's family after he was forced to sell his land. He and his wife were allegedly assaulted in that case.

Karthik said that after losing the land, he had approached BJP leader G. Devaraje Gowda, who had challenged Prajwal Gowda's election in court, and sought his help. As per his guidance, he shared details of the land issue with the media.

Later, Karthik shared videos and photos he possessed with Devaraje Gowda. He (Gowda) had assured him that the photos and videos would not be shown to anyone.

"Believing him, I shared a copy of the videos. It seems he used them for his selfish needs," he said.

Karthik, in his statement, states that except for Devaraje Gowda, he did not share the videos and photos with anyone else. "Devaraje Gowda had been telling the media that the videos had reached Congress leaders. I did not share the content with any of the Congress leaders, as I had no confidence in them. They had not come to my rescue in the land case," he said.

Further, he said he would appear before the SIT and share all the contents he had.

INBRIEF

Water adalat tomorrow

BWSSB will hold water adalat on Thursday between 9.30 a.m. and 11 a.m. It will be held in the following sub-divisions: East 1-1: BEML Layout, near ITPL, 4th Main Road, Kundalahalli Main Road. East 2-1: 1st Block, 9th D Main Service Road, HRBR Layout, Kalyan Nagar; South East 1: Swami Vivekananda Road, opposite Lido Mall, Halasur; South East 4: 10th Main Road, 7th Cross, behind Indiranagar Club, HAL 2nd Stage; West 1-1: Ground Floor, Arkavathi Bhavan, 5th Main, 9th Cross, RPC Layout, Vijayanagar 2nd Stage; West 2-1: 5th Stage, 1st Main, BEML Layout, R.R. Nagar.

Discussion on Draft Indian Standard held

The Bengaluru branch of the Bureau of Indian Standards, the national standards body (under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Govt of India), organised Manak Manthan, a discussion on the Draft Indian Standard for the sixth revision of IS 4246, domestic gas stoves for use with liquefied petroleum gases – specification, here on Tuesday. As many as 28 participants of industries, laboratories, and consumer societies from across the State joined the online and offline discussion. BIS, in a release, said this meeting was intended to bring standardisation process closer to all stakeholders, encouraging faster adoption and simultaneously soliciting feedback on challenges and opportunities.

E-paper edition

The Hindu offers more coverage of Bengaluru in the e-paper edition. (epaper.thehindu.com)

In the issue dated May 1, we take a look at how a bunch of new-age companies with a digital presence seem to be approaching alternatives like debt-based financiers and private equity players instead of taking the usual venture capital route. The brands which bypass VCs also feel that the PE route aligns with their business model given their strong focus on profitability over cash burn.

Text & Context and Science

Weekday features on *The Hindu* epaper (epaper.thehindu.com) carries explainers, special articles and quizzes. In the latest issue (May 1, Wednesday), the following articles are available:

- Constitution and the redistribution of wealth **bit.ly/wealthredistribute**
- Study says microbes, not fossil fuels, produced most new methane **bit.ly/microbesfossil**

PODCAST

- **The Sambandhi Connect** | Women Uninterrupted podcast - Episode 4 **newsth.live/XZt7Zi**

You can use your smartphone's inbuilt features to access these articles. If it's an Android phone, use Google Lens to read and tap the url to access an article. If it's an iPhone, use Live Text on camera to do the same.

JD(S) suspends Prajwal

The Hindu Bureau
HUBBALLI

Prajwal Revanna

Janata Dal (Secular) on Tuesday suspended Prajwal Revanna, the party's MP in Hassan, who has been accused of sexually exploiting several women. The decision was announced after the party's core committee meeting in Hubballi, which was scheduled to chalk out the poll strategy for the second phase of elections in Karnataka.

Pen drives that show alleged acts of sexual exploitation by the member of Parliament in question have been in circulation in Hassan even prior to elections on April 26, embarrassing the party and also the Bharatiya Janata Party with which it had aligned for the Lok Sabha election.

The party was under pressure to take action against the MP, whose alleged acts are now being probed by a Special Investigation Team.

In the letter announcing his suspension, the party said the videos doing the rounds have "caused considerable damage to the party's dignity and leadership". Prajwal is believed to be out of India.

On Tuesday, addressing pressmen in Hubballi, AICC spokesperson Supriya Srinate accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah of being mute spectators despite knowing everything.

NCW seeks report from State police

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The National Commission for Women (NCW) has sought a report within three days from the Karnataka police over allegations of sexual abuse involving Lok Sabha MP Prajwal Revanna.

In a letter to Karnataka DGP, the NCW drew attention to this matter following the circulation of several explicit video clips on social media platforms depicting Mr. Revanna allegedly engaged in acts of sexual abuse against multiple women.

The Commission urged prompt and decisive action to apprehend the accused, who is reported to have fled the country. It also emphasised the importance of ensuring the safety and dignity of women and preventing the perpetuation of a culture that fosters disrespect and violence against them.

"The Commission strongly condemns the incident and is deeply disturbed by its occurrence," the letter read.

"Such events not only endanger women's safety but also foster a culture of disrespect and violence against them. We urge prompt and decisive action from the concerned Police Authority to swiftly apprehend the accused, who has fled the country," it said. The Commission has demanded that a detailed report outlining the measures taken by the police authority concerned be submitted to it within three days.

Mr. Prajwal, 33, is the BJP-JD (S) alliance candidate for the Hassan Lok Sabha seat.

Training in Yakshagana

The Hindu Bureau
MANGALURU

Founder president of Yakshadhruva Patla Foundation Trust Patla Satish Shetty said that the trust has trained over 4,000 students of government schools in Yakshagana.

Timings
BENGALURU

WEDNESDAY, MAY. 01	
RISE	05:59 SET 18:35
RISE	00:30 SET 12:08
THURSDAY, MAY. 02	
RISE	05:59 SET 18:35
RISE	01:20 SET 13:08
FRIDAY, MAY. 03	
RISE	05:58 SET 18:35
RISE	02:06 SET 14:05

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	37	27
Mysuru	38	25
Bengaluru	38	25

Bengaluru Today
38°C Morning will be pleasant Day will be slight hot and uneasy. Heat wave is likely. Chances of light rain and thundershower.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
37°C The weather will be dry. Day will be very warm with uneasy afternoon. Night will comfortable

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162 special needs children complete pre-school training

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

It was a special day at the All India Institute of Speech and Hearing in Mysuru as 162 children with special needs successfully completed their training at the pre-school training centre at the Department of Special Education here in the campus.

They are now all set to join mainstream schools after going through pre-school activities conducted by the AIISH. Among the children, 145 are being mainstreamed while the remaining 17 have been recommended for partial integration with special support services.

A programme was held on AIISH campus here on Tuesday where children received certificates for having completed the training. Their caregivers were also present and they received training which was also key for supporting their children to join the mainstream schools. The programme was held to celebrate the success of pre-school children for having successfully completed the training and to motivate caregivers for inclusive education.

Ashwathamma C., Deputy Director, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities and Senior Citizens, Bengaluru, was the chief guest. In her address, she highlighted the importance of Constitutional rights of persons with disabilities and spoke about the initiatives taken up by the Government of Karnataka.

NATIONAL BOARD OF EXAMINATIONS IN MEDICAL SCIENCES
(Autonomous body of the M/o. Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of India)
NAMS Building, Medical Enclave, Ansari Nagar, New Delhi – 110029

NBEMS DIPLOMA FINAL THEORY EXAMINATION – June 2024

NOTICE

National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS) shall conduct the NBEMS Diploma Final Theory Examinations on **14, 15 and 16 June 2024**.

Please refer to the Information Bulletin at NBEMS website https://natboard.edu.in for eligibility criteria, fee structure, scheme of examination and other details.

Important Dates	
Online Submission of the Application Form *(Theory & Practical)*	30th April 2024 (3 PM Onwards) to 20th May 2024 (Till 11:55 PM)
Date of Theory Examination	14th, 15th and 16th June 2024
Last Date for submission of *"Only Practical Examination"* applications	31st July 2024

Candidate Care Support: +91-7996165333
- Helpline Portal on applicant login page
- Communication Web Portal on NBEMS Website

NATIONAL BOARD OF EXAMINATIONS IN MEDICAL SCIENCES
(Autonomous body of the M/o. Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of India)
NAMS Building, Medical Enclave, Ansari Nagar, New Delhi – 110029

FOREIGN MEDICAL GRADUATE EXAMINATION – JUNE 2024

NOTICE

National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS) shall conduct the next **FMGE** on **6th July 2024**.

Please refer to the Information Bulletin at NBEMS website https://natboard.edu.in for details pertaining to eligibility criteria, fee structure, scheme of examination and other details.

Important Dates	
Online Submission of the Application Form	29th April 2024 (1 PM Onwards) to 20th May 2024 (Till 11:55 PM)
Date of Examination	6th July 2024
Declaration of the Result	By 6th August 2024

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- Communication Web Portal on NBEMS Website

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XPRESSIONS

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I, REKHA Nagraj, w/o Nagraj Venkatesh, R/at No.12, Yashus, 2nd Main, 6th Cross, Muneshwara Block, Near Govt. Hospital, Laggere, Bengaluru - 560058, have changed my name from Rekha Nagraj to Rekha Ramachandra Sunagar vide affidavit dated 30/04/2024 before Notary Udaykumar.K, Bengaluru.

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ISSN 0971 - 751X

Sibling rivalry in full force in Shivamogga

"The Minister for School Education (Madhu Bangarappa) needs to be sent back to primary school again so that he learns how to address elders and how to talk in public," said the former Minister and BJP leader Kumar Bangarappa on Tuesday.

At an election campaign meeting in Shivamogga, Mr. Kumar Bangarappa came down heavily on his younger brother Mr. Madhu Bangarappa, Minister for School Education, and his sister, Geetha Shivarajkumar, Congress candidate for the Shivamogga LS seat.

Targeting his sister, he said, "A few film personalities may have come here to campaign for her. But, the whole industry is not with them. Many producers have not extended their support to the Congress candidate."

Kumar Bangarappa, BJP leader

Who is more qualified than whom?

Reacting to BJP MP Umesh Jadhav's query about the education qualification of RDPR Minister Priyank Kharge, the latter asked the former to provide the details of the education qualification of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"I have completed a diploma in animation, and I am constitutionally qualified to become a legislator," Mr. Kharge said, adding that he was ready to submit an affidavit about his qualification and dared him to submit a similar affidavit about Mr. Modi.

At several press meets, Mr. Jadhav had sought to know what Mr. Kharge's qualification was that he speaks about various subjects. To this, Mr. Kharge said he, as an appointed spokesperson of the party, was well within his rights to speak about various issues.

BJP leaders have been showing great interest in the murder of Neha Hiremath in Hubballi, but none in the women victims of Hassan.

LAXMI HEBBALKAR,
Women and Child Development Minister

Over 36,000 calls to helpline

The Election Commission has received as many as 36,303 calls on its voter helpline, of which 35,991 people have sought information, 39 have given feedback, 36 have made suggestions, and 237 have registered complaints, said a release from the authority. In addition, 20,627 complaints have been registered by citizens on the NGRS portal.

Why had the Congress govt. in Karnataka not taken action so far? We do not have to take action as law and order is a State subject.

AMIT SHAH,
Union Home Minister

Choosing one: The Election Commission puts up a list of free symbols for Independents and candidates of political parties that are not recognised as national or State parties to pick up. FILE PHOTO

Candidates opt from mundane symbols to the unusual ones

Afshan Yasmeen
BENGALURU

Fruits and vegetables, household items, kitchen utensils, computers, air-conditioners, refrigerators, televisions, and CCTV cameras ... These are some of the election symbols chosen by candidates in the two-phase Lok Sabha polls in Karnataka.

While pressure cooker, pot, glass tumbler, mixer, and gas cylinder are the popular choices, torch, coconut farm, autorickshaw, diesel pump, bat, TV remote, dish antenna, and baby walker are some of the unusual symbols. A basket containing fruits, a plate containing food, robot, footwear, triangle, flute, water tank, helmet, phone charger, road roller, doorbell, handcart, stumps, throwing a javelin, and rubber stamp are the novel entries this time.

These symbols are for Independent candidates and those from registered political parties that are not recognised as national or State parties.

Candidates in the fray

In all, 247 candidates, including 21 women, were in the fray in the 14 constituencies that went to the polls on April 26 in Karnataka. A total of 118 Independents and 88 from registered unrecognised political parties were in the fray. As many as 12 candidates were from the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), and one from the CPI(M).

For the May 7 polls, in all 227 candidates are contesting, including 21 women. Apart from 117 Independents and 73 RUPP candidates, nine are from the BSP.

A senior official from the Election Commission said that the common symbols allotted to candidates of unrecognised political parties are not allotted to any other candidate. However, the symbol will be available for allotment as a free symbol to other Independent candidates in the constituencies where these parties do not nominate candidates.

Namesakes back

Every election there are some candidates whose namesakes contest to confuse voters. This time, in Bengaluru Rural, two sets of candidates with similar names were in the fray. While cardiologist C.N. Manjunath contested on the BJP ticket, another C.N. Manjunatha from the Bahujan Bharat Party was in the fray with 'ganna kissan' (sugarcane farmer) as the party symbol.

Likewise, two persons with names similar to Congress candidate D.K. Suresh contested in Bengaluru Rural. They were Suresh S. from the Karunadu Party with batsman as his symbol and Suresh M.N. with gas cylinder as his symbol.

Shobha Karandlaje in Bengaluru North also had a namesake contesting as an Independent with the almirah symbol.

In Hassan, Prajwal Revanna contested against H.D. Revanna (namesake of his father) from Purvanchal Mahapanchayat with batsman as symbol. The same person also contested in Mandya where the former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy is the JD(S)-BJP alliance candidate.

In Shivamogga, former BJP Minister K.S. Eshwarappa who is contesting as an Independent with 'ganna kissan' as symbol has his namesake D.S. Eshwarappa, another Independent, with ring as symbol, in the fray.

Will JD(S) votes shift to Congress in pockets of LS constituencies in NK?

For BJP, which was using the killing of Neha as part of its women's safety narrative, the conduct of a leader from its ally JD(S) is an embarrassment

PRAJWAL CASE

Nagesh Prabhu
BENGALURU

The alleged sex scandal involving Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna could cause a swing of Janata Dal (Secular) voters towards the ruling Congress in Karnataka and may play a spoilsport in the BJP's hopes of cashing in on the "Modi wave" in constituencies that are going to the polls in North Karnataka on May 7.

The sex scandal that rocked the JD(S) has become a major issue of public debate in the State. Though the JD(S) has no significant presence across North Karnataka, it has a sizable vote bank in pockets of parliamentary constituencies such as Vijayapura, Ballari, Kalaburagi, and Raichur.

Though elections have already been held in the three constituencies where the JD(S) contested, the scandal seems to have severely dented the public image of the party, which has entered into alliance with the BJP.

While elections in the first phase in the State was fought largely on the narrative of "step-motherly treatment" towards Karnataka by the Centre and the Congress government's guarantees, the women's safety issue has apparently become a major poll plank in the second phase.

Seeking action: National Students' Union of India supporters along with students of Maharani College staging a protest against JD(S) MP Prajwal Revanna in Bengaluru on Tuesday. ANI

Counter by Congress

After the BJP galvanised its cadre following the brutal murder of student Neha Hiremath on the college campus in Hubballi, the Congress now has a handle in the sexual abuse case to counter the alliance, particularly the BJP, which is contesting against it in 14 constituencies of North Karnataka. The Congress leaders have been using social media, holding press conferences, and staging protests daily across the State to embarrass JD(S) and BJP leaders.

The Congress has questioned the silence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has launched the flagship programme of 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao', in an attempt to discredit the BJP's campaign on "appeasement politics" by the Congress.

HDK's remark

Earlier, JD(S) leader and former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy's remark of "women going astray" following the implementation of the guarantees had not gone down well with the women voters, and this conduct of a JD(S) leader might add to it.

Sources in the Congress claimed that sexual abuse videos allegedly involving Mr. Prajwal Revanna, grandson of the former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, is likely to truncate the JD(S) base further in the Old Mysore region, which was significantly captured by the Congress in the 2023 Assembly polls.

Political observers say that the JD(S), which is facing the test of its electoral survival in Karnataka, should come out clean before it can face the next round of elections to urban and rural local bodies in the State.

HDK and DKS spar over case

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU/HUBBALLI

The alleged sex scandal involving JD(S) MP Prajwal Revanna has sparked yet another round of war of words between Deputy Chief Minister and KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar and JD(S) State president and former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy.

Speaking in Hubballi, Mr. Kumaraswamy accused Mr. Shivakumar of being involved in circulating the sex videos and sought to know why the name of Prime Minister Narendra Modi was being dragged into the controversy. He said a "conspiracy was being hatched to defame the Deve Gowda family". Mr. Kumaraswamy also alleged that the pen drive had been deliberately leaked to defeat the BJP-JD(S) coalition.

Reacting strongly, Mr. Shivakumar said he "does not blackmail others with pen drives and CDs" like Mr. Kumaraswamy. "I fight my fights directly and I don't blackmail with pen drives and CDs like Kumaraswamy," he said.

Asked about Mr. Kumaraswamy's statement that he was behind the pen drive case, the KPCC chief said, "H.D. Revanna himself has admitted that the video clips are old ones. BJP leader Devaraje Gowda had written to the BJP State and national leaders about this case. He has spoken to the media about it. Where am I in all this?"

Asked about Mr. Devaraje Gowda's statement that Mr. Shivakumar and MP D.K. Suresh were aware of the pen drive, he said, "Mr. Devaraje Gowda has said that his driver informed him about it ... This issue is about women. As per the information I have, it is about 200-300 women and their families, including party workers. There were murmurs about the pen drive for some time and I had heard them as president of a political party."

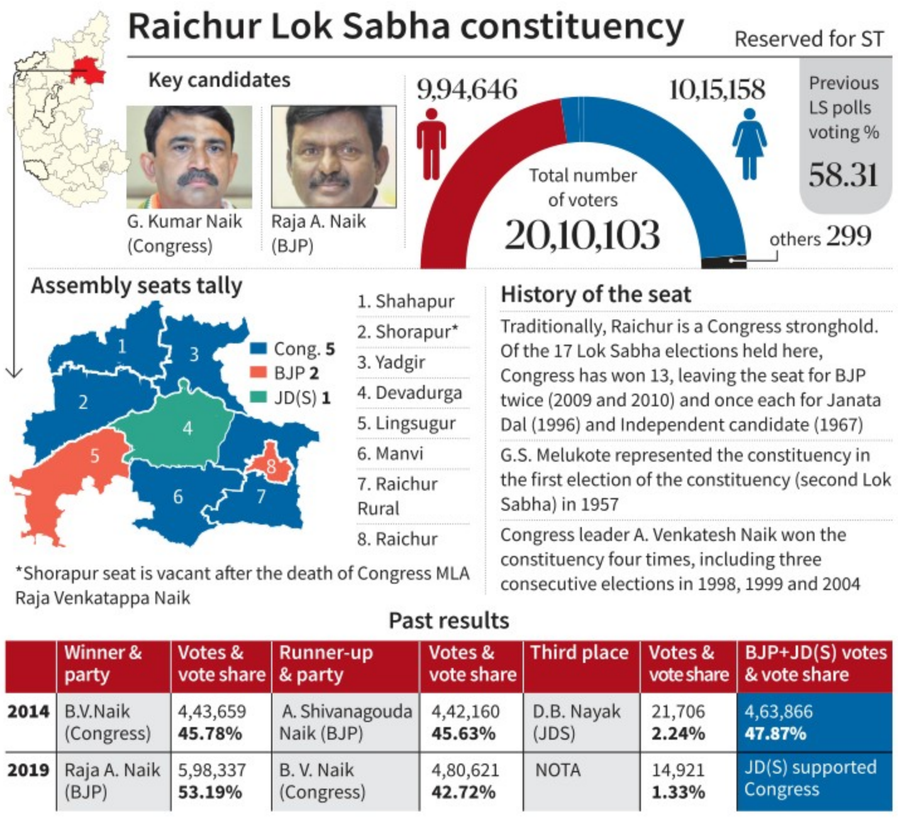
Poser to Amit Shah

On the suspension of Mr. Prajwal Revanna from the JD(S), the Congress leader said, "I would like to ask Home Minister Amit Shah if they would like to continue their alliance. On the one hand, the BJP says it respects women but on the other hand, they are continuing their alliance with the JD(S)."

It's a battle between 'raja' and ex-public servant

Kumar Buradikatti
KALABURAGI

The electoral battle in the Raichur Lok Sabha constituency this time is interesting with a new entrant – G. Kumar Naik, who is a former civil servant – being pitted as the Congress candidate against incumbent MP and scion of the erstwhile Guntagol royal family Raja Amareshwar Naik for the second term. Mr. Kumar Naik, a 1990-batch IAS officer, had served as the Deputy Commissioner of Raichur between 1999 and 2002, before assuming higher offices in bureaucracy.



Past results

	Winner & party	Votes & vote share	Runner-up & party	Votes & vote share	Third place	Votes & vote share	BJP+JD(S) votes & vote share
2014	B.V.Naik (Congress)	4,43,659 **45.78%**	A. Shivanagouda Naik (BJP)	4,42,160 **45.63%**	D.B. Nayak (JDS)	21,706 **2.24%**	4,63,866 **47.87%**
2019	Raja A. Naik (BJP)	5,98,337 **53.19%**	B. V. Naik (Congress)	4,80,621 **42.72%**	NOTA	14,921 **1.33%**	JD(S) supported Congress

Rebellion within

The biggest concern for Mr. Amareshwar Naik is the rebellion from his own party workers after B.V. Naik, one of the strong contestants for the BJP ticket, raised a banner of revolt after he was denied the ticket. Mr. B.V. Naik, earlier with the Congress, won the 2014 Lok Sabha election in Raichur and lost the 2019 election against Mr. Amareshwar Naik. He left the Congress and joined the BJP last year to unsuccessfully contest in the Manvi Assembly segment. This time he was hoping to get the party ticket to contest the Lok Sabha election from Raichur, but was denied it.

Though BJP's Karnataka in-charge Radha Mohan Das Agarwal met the disgruntled leader and tried to placate him, the anger among Mr. B.V. Naik's supporters has not died down, making the going tough for Mr. Amareshwar Naik. Also, Mr. Kumar Naik has maintained close ties with Mr. B.V. Naik and his family for over thirty years now.

The BJP and its candidate are heavily dependent on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's popularity and the influence of the Surpur and Guntagol "royalty" in some Assembly segments. But many say that both these factors have dimmed over the years, with the "inaccessibility" of Mr. Amareshwar Naik being an issue.

Losing out on IIT

People in urban areas, especially Raichur, are quite upset with the BJP for denying the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) and All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) to the district. There is a strong opinion that the IIT was sanctioned to Hubballi-Dharwad just to satisfy BJP leaders there. Activists and organisations who had unsuccessfully agitated for the IIT are now demanding an AIIMS for the city and the Union government has remained silent even after the Karnataka government's recommendation to set up the premier health institution in Raichur.

On the other hand, Mr. Kumar Naik is mainly riding on the State government's five guarantees and his party's fresh promises for the Lok Sabha elections, especially the financial assistance of ₹1 lakh a year to women heads of families. Since women are the main beneficiaries of the guarantee schemes, the Congress hopes that it would play a role in tilting the balance in this constituency where women voters outnumber men.

Promise of reservoir

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announcing in his Budget speech the construction of a balancing reservoir at Navale in Koppal district can also help the Congress mobilise votes in the rural areas along the Tungabhadra Left Bank Canal that irrigates large tracts of land in the district. The proposed reservoir is widely seen as a solution to the diminished storage capacity of the Tungabhadra reservoir owing to the accumulation of over 30 tmcft silt.

The BJP is branding the Congress candidate as an "outsider", while Mr. Kumar Naik is countering it by showing the development work he had done for Raichur as its Deputy Commissioner. Minor Irrigation Minister N. Bose Raju and his son Ravi Bose Raju are also working to boost Mr. Kumar Naik's prospects. However, there is a section of leaders and activists opposed to Mr. Bose Raju and neglecting this aspect may be risky for Mr. Kumar Naik.

'This election is not about Modi but *mudda*'

The Hindu Bureau
KALABURAGI

Yogendra Yadav, national convener of Bharat Jodo Abhiyan, has said that the BJP is engaging common people of the country in a "psychological warfare" with the slogan *Abki baar, 400 paar* (this time, 400 plus).

At a press conference in Kalaburagi on Tuesday, Mr. Yadav said, "This time the election is not about [Prime Minister] Narendra Modi, but *mudda* (issues)." Issues such as price rise, farmers' income, unemployment, corruption, and electoral bond scam are in the reckoning." He accused Mr. Modi of diverting attention from core issues that the people of the nation have been facing for the last 10 years under the BJP rule.

Changes to Constitution

Mr. Yadav alleged that the BJP had set a target to win more than 400 seats to get a clear majority as they want to make several changes in the Constitution and help the RSS succeed in abolishing reservation. The BJP-led government was "destroying the idea of India" by attacking the Constitution, Mr. Yadav said.

Slow and steady, be more wealthy: More start-ups eye private equity funds, bypass VCs

A bunch of new-age companies with a digital presence seem to be approaching alternatives like debt-based financiers and private equity players instead of taking the usual venture capital route

As per data from Tracxn, between 2021 and till date 321 companies have raised equity funding from PEs in India. They did not raise any capital from VCs. GETTY IMAGES

Umar Akhter

Shilpa Elizabeth
BENGALURU

In June 2023, Bengaluru-based occasionwear brand Koskii raised ₹61 crore in a series A round. What made it stand out was that it wasn't a funding round led by a venture capital firm, but by Baring Private Equity Partners India.

Venture Capital (VC) has been the go-to option for most start-ups to raise funds. However, of late, a bunch of new-age companies seem to be approaching alternate options like debt-based financiers and private equity players instead of taking the usual VC route.

While one of the catalysts seems to be the prolonged venture capital funding winter, the brands which bypass VCs also feel that the PE route aligns with their business model given their strong focus on profitability over cash burn.

Filling the void

As per data from Tracxn, between 2021 and till date 321 companies have raised equity funding from PEs in India. None of these companies raised any capital from VCs.

"We are seeing private equity activity, which used to be limited to more mature and late-stage companies, happening across multiple new age companies," says Abhiroop Medhekar, CEO and co-founder at Velocity, a revenue-based financing (RBF) company.

"These are companies which were bootstrapped initially. They would build for four or five years and then scale it to a level where PEs also found it interesting to come in and participate," he adds.

A start-up funding trajectory typically starts with seed rounds and angel investments, and then go through multiple rounds of VC funding before it scales to a size that can attract PE players.

However, according to Medhekar, the recent funding winter created a void which is being filled by alternative financiers like debt investors and revenue-based financing firms, and towards later stages by private equity players.

The ecosystem went through a similar funding crunch around the year 2017. According to the annual Indus Valley Report 2024 by Blume Ventures, venture funding in India in 2023 dropped to pre-2017 levels. The report also notes how Indian PEs have delivered exits consistently unlike the VC players which haven't hit that level of consistency yet.

The right fit

While VCs taking the backseat is one of the big factors driving the current trend, Medhekar also feels it's a sign of the ecosystem maturing as companies are realising different types of investments need different types of capital.

"Across most consumer brands, the business is fairly stable - you are selling a product, you understand the margins, you are marketing across multiple platforms, you understand the return on that marketing spend. It's a very predictable game. For a spend like that, founders are increasingly concerned about the dilution of equity and that early-stage investors coming in expecting a very high growth profile may not be a right fit."

Abhiroop Medhekar

Umar Akhter, founder and CEO of Koskii, echoes similar sentiments.

"From the get-set-go we wanted the business to be profitable and we took it slow. We built a business which was robust from a unit economic perspective. What that meant was at the core of what we built, we built a profitable cash generating business," says Akhter. This strategy helped in making the company an attractive bet for PEs, he adds.

Madhur Gujar

Mukul Gulati

"Private equity investors are looking at companies that have a solid business, whose unit economics are strong and are already generating cash and then growing. So, for us, when we started looking for funding, our philosophy aligned well with that of Baring Equity."

Aiming for IPO

Some of the other start-ups that chose the alternate route include student accommodation start-up Amber, assisted mobility brand Arcatron, and budget hotel chain Bloom Hotels among others.

For Amber it was a conscious decision to choose the PE route as Madhur Gujar, founder of the company, feels it's tough to stay profitable when a company raise funds that come with expectations of fast growth.

"Due to the current uncertainty, more and more founders are shifting towards running business in a bootstrapped or profitable way. In this journey, RBF funds become very useful because if you have thin margins, traditional banks may not fund you as they need a lot of credit history, cash flow and so on," he says.

Amber which sought financing from Velocity in its early stage raised $21 million in February 2024 in a round led by PE firm Gaja Capital.

"Going ahead, we want to run the business sustainably and profitability, A few years down the line plans like IPOs can definitely be on our cards; And PE firms have a lot of expertise in taking companies to IPO. So, that is an additional advantage," Gujar notes.

Interestingly, many of these are Direct to Consumer (D2C) brands with a digital presence.

Wealth creation

Medhekar adds to this. "Every equity round at an early stage leads to anywhere between 15 to 25% dilution of the founder's stake. And to IPO in India over the next seven to 10 years they have to scale their business to a particular revenue level. At this point their wealth creation is a function of how much stake they are left with in the company."

According to him for a founder who bypasses the VC route and takes the PE path, the founder's percentage stake in the company and overall wealth creation could be double or more for similar revenue.

"If you look at all of the recent start-ups which got listed, all of their founders have a very low stake in the company. But if you compare that with the more traditional listed companies in India, there promoters hold a significant stake because they have built the companies on the back of debt and late-stage capital," he says.

Interestingly, many of the startups that raise PE money are direct-to-consumer (D2C) brands with a digital presence. According to Mukul Gulati, President and Chief Investment Officer at Zephyr Management, a New York-based PE firm which has its India office in Bengaluru, PE funds are also open to fintech (in particular, lending businesses) and healthcare delivery at an early stage.

"An experienced founder can attract institutional capital in these areas since the business models are well-established," he says.

VCs to stay

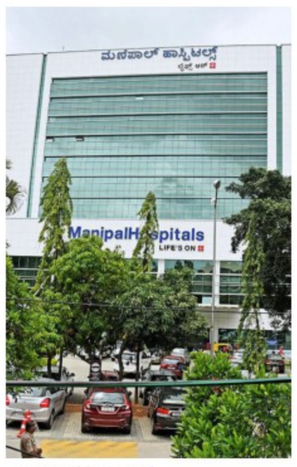
While there seems to be an increasing number of start-ups considering the PE route, it's however no sign of waning interest in VC money.

"Most start-ups in India continue to target VC/early-stage investors. Access to capital allows more rapid growth. Also, some founders may benefit from the advice and network that VC provides," says Gulati. Also, not all start-ups can afford to bootstrap. For example, start-ups that are tech-heavy or are into software do not see consistent revenue at least in the initial days and therefore venture money becomes inevitable.

"For tech companies, I think PEs will still find it a bit difficult to build a point of view on their future growth profile. But consumer brands is a space that PEs understand quite well," says Medhekar.

Manipal Hospitals acquires majority stake in Medica Synergie

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU



Manipal hospital.

Manipal Hospitals, a Bengaluru-based healthcare provider, on Monday said it signed a binding agreement to acquire an 87% stake in Kolkata-based hospital chain Medica Synergie. It would invest around ₹1,400 crores to acquire the controlling stake, said sources.

A media release from Manipal Hospitals said this acquisition was in line with Manipal Hospitals' strategy of expanding its footprint and presence in eastern India as the leading hospital chain in the region.

By leveraging the clinical expertise and infrastructure of Medica Synergie, along with the combined operations of its extensive network, Manipal Hospitals will be well-positioned to meet the increasing demand for tertiary and quaternary healthcare services in eastern India, especially in Kolkata, Siliguri, and Ranchi, it said.

Dilip Jose, MD & CEO said, "With this acquisition, Manipal Hospitals builds on its strong presence in eastern India, enabling us to expand our reach and meet the healthcare needs of this underserved region. We will integrate Medica Synergie into our portfolio and rebrand it."

With the acquisition of Medica, Manipal Hospitals treats 7 million patients annually across 37 hospitals spanning 19 cities in 14 states.

The addition of Medica has pushed the current hospital bed count from over 9,500 to over 10,500. With a talented pool of 5,600+ doctors, along with an employee strength exceeding 18,600,, as per the communique.

Enabling Leadership's Kidz4Kidz 2024 concert breaks boundaries for social impact

Through their performances and fundraising efforts, participants demonstrated their commitment to making a meaningful difference in the lives of others

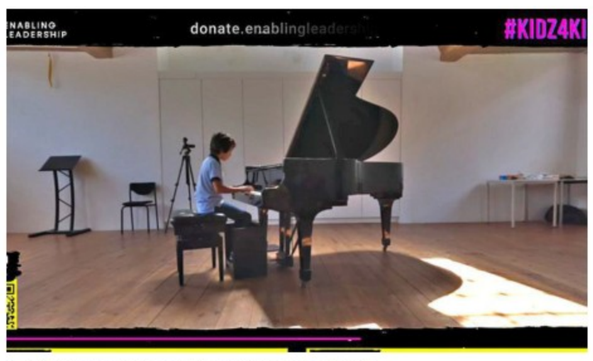
The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Enabling Leadership, a global non-profit organization with a mission to inculcate essential leadership and life skills in children who come from under-resourced backgrounds recently concluded the second edition of the Kidz4Kidz online fundraising concert.

The 36-hour-long global event was streamed on Enabling Leadership's YouTube channel, captivating audiences worldwide.

Fundraising efforts

This year's concert goal was to support 2,000 marginalized children worldwide. Kidz4Kidz 2024 brought together 250 talented young musicians from 16 countries, including Australia, Singapore, Malaysia, India, Hong Kong, China, UAE, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, Netherlands, Kenya, Zimbabwe, U.K., U.S., and Canada, who dazzled the audience with their musical abilities and at the same time, raised funds to support children enrolled in EL's programmes.



A child performing at the Kidz4Kidz concert.

According to the release, through their performances and fundraising efforts, participants demonstrated their commitment to making a meaningful difference in the lives of others.

Ravi Sonnad, Founder & CEO of Enabling Leadership, said, "Music is a powerful medium that builds critical life and leadership skills and at the same time, brings people together. At Enabling Leadership, we believe that every child can be a leader and a force for positive change in their communities."

All participants who fundraised received a Social Service Certificate, gaining a competitive edge for their university applications and joining a global network of change-makers through the Kidz4Kidz Ambassador Programme.

Participants in the Kidz4Kidz concert performed two songs each and helped to raise funds to support 10 children in the EL programmes. These students were able to connect with the children they were supporting through regular virtual calls, enabling them to develop a unique bond across cultures and backgrounds.

Those students who met their fundraising goal also received a letter of recommendation. They were also featured in global posts, showcasing their commitment to making a difference.

Panel discussions

The event this year also featured panel discussions with eminent global personalities and guest appearances by international musicians such as Dr. Veronica Stewart, Founder & Director, Sydney Voice Studio; Shobhana Raghavan, Musician; Jack Thomas, Founder and Director of Performer's Collective School of Music; Dominic D' Cruz, Musician; and Dr. Sarah Fabian, Director of Athletic Bands among other eminent people.

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 1, 1974

Rice Zone Within Karnataka Likely

Bengaluru, April 30: A rice zone within Karnataka State is a distinct possibility following a hint thrown by the Chief Minister, D. Devaraj Urs, to a group of legislators of South Kanara district. The rice zone, it is pointed out, is conceived of as an alternative to the present ban on interior district movement of rice and other foodgrains. The zone would be carved out of the rice-growing districts of Shimoga, Coorg, Chikmagalur and South Kanara and one other contiguous district. The existing ban on inter district movement of foodgrains would be lifted in this zone and movement within this zone would be freely allowed without the permit.

Increase in Sales Tax to fetch Additional Revenue of Rs. 5.5 Cr.

Bengaluru, April 30: The Karnataka Assembly to-day passed the Karnataka Sales Tax (Amendment) Bill 1974. The Bill proposes to raise the rate of Sales Tax on 59 items and it will result in an additional revenue of Rs. 5.5 crores.

Replying to a debate on the Bill, the Finance Minister, Mr. Ghorpade said that the proposed increase in the rate of Sales Tax on certain commodities was not on the "high side."

Far from it, it was an attempt aimed at bringing the rate of Sales Tax on a number of commodities on par with other neighbouring States such as Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala.

CITYBEATS

Summer quenchers

ONGOING
Maverick & Farmer presents a range of cool brews to help you beat the summer heat. This range includes four drinks created with tender coconut water and musk melons – classic, melonnaire, floral and fizzicality. Prices start at ₹259.
These are available at Maverick & Farmer, Ulsoor and Koramangala between 8.30am and 10pm.

Roman fiesta

ONGOING
Roxie has an ongoing food festival called the Ancient Roman Pasta Festival. The festival menu, extensively focussing on pastas, is created by chef Viveq Pwara, who has drawn his inspiration from his research and membership at the Accademia Italiana Della Cucina.
Call 47360000 to connect with Roxie, HSR Layout

Pop goes the soda

ONGOING
Oxbow Brands presents Dobra Pop Goli, which is said to be a rendition of the marble soda. These are inspired by goli soda, banta soda and fotash jol, which are found commonly in every corner of India. Dobra Pop Goli comes in six flavours – nimbu masala, blueberry, grape, mango, kokum jeera and apple mojito.
Available across India.

Food for thought

Cafe Zubaan in Koramangala, Bengaluru, is more than a restaurant — it's a community hub with delicious Lebanese food and lively conversations on social issues

Praveen Sudevan

Tucked away on a quiet bylane off the 80-foot Road in Koramangala, Bengaluru, Cafe Zubaan stands out from the surrounding din. Its white-and-pastel green facade is calming. It is adorned with vibrant bursts of colour from overflowing planters and cascading creepers that frame a simple sign. Stepping inside, the frenetic pace of the city seems to melt away. The air is filled with the lilting melody of a *ghazal*, instantly transporting us to a world of serenity.

Sunlight streams through tall windows, illuminating a minimalist space punctuated by splashes of colour. Ornate tiles define the floor, while sturdy wooden tables and chairs stand ready for intimate conversations. A simple glass vase adorned with a bouquet of sunshine yellow and crisp white blooms (real, not plastic) sits on all the tables. As you unfold the menu, the inscription "Cafe Zubaan, Bengaluru" is followed by a tagline encapsulating the establishment's essence: "an ode, a dream."

The day's heat was relentless, and we desperately needed something cool and refreshing to quench our thirst. Labeeb Usman and Jasna Moidu, the creators of Zubaan, suggested Saudi Champagne. This non-alcoholic drink was a feast for the eyes even before the first sip. Sparkling golden liquid, made of 7Up or Sprite, formed the base.

Atop this bubbly canvas floated a vibrant island of seasonal fruits: watermelon chunks, their juicy redness, a burst of colour; crisp green apple slices adding a touch of tartness; juicy sweet orange segments providing pops of citrus; and a wedge of lemon, its vibrant yellow a final flourish. Fresh mint leaves, their soothing green, a welcome contrast, not only added a touch of visual intrigue but hinted at the refreshing coolness to come.

As we sipped the Saudi champagne, we focused on the menu. Zubaan's culinary focus is Lebanese cuisine, and the mezze platter was a natural starting point. We followed it up with succulent chunks of the Istanbul kebab and a plate of mix grill.

To complete our meal, we could not resist indulging in a cup of hot Kahwa, the cafe's signature beverage. But it is not just this brew that is Zubaan's signature – there are books, too. A carefully curated selection of books (about gender, caste, sex, etc) is neatly arranged on a small shelf on the wall. Labeeb and Jasna came up with a monthly lecture series called *Kahwa Aur Kithabein* (Brew and Books), wherein they call distinguished speakers to talk about socio-political topics. Some speakers include transgender activist Akkai Padmashali, journalist Dhanya Rajendran, actor-activist Chetan Ahimsa, and documentary filmmaker Jyoti Nisha.

Zubaan, in Urdu and Hindi, means tongue. It is a carefully thought-out name. For Labeeb and Jasna, the tongue is not just for tasting; it is also for talking about issues that concern society.

"We wanted a space that celebrated more than just food," says Labeeb, "From the beginning, our focus has been on building community. It's about connection, relationship-building, and fostering a space where people can unite. We thought intellectual sessions might be a good starting point."

"I was set on creating something that revolved around books but also sparked conversation," adds Jasna, "That was the core idea behind Kahwa Aur Kithabein. We both firmly believed in the power of community. It couldn't be about us sitting there, acting like we have all the answers. It's about the shared experience of reading, discussing, and learning together."

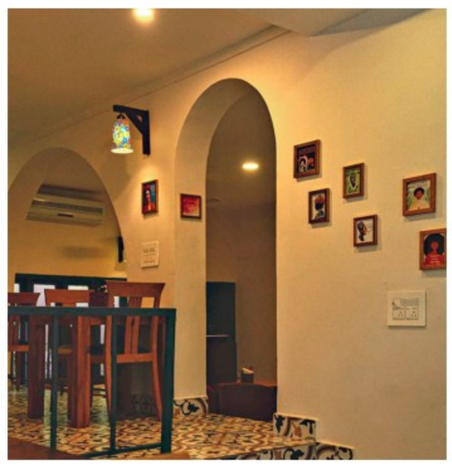
The Kahwa Aur Kithabein sessions often evoked strong emotions. Labeeb describes the day Akkai visited Zubaan.

"She asked a simple question: 'Can you all tell me your gender?' And the response was eye-opening. Most people admitted they'd never truly explored their gender identity," he recalls, "They were conditioned to think in terms of just men, women, or maybe transgender, but Akkai opened their eyes to the vast spectrum of possibilities. People started hesitantly identifying as cis-woman or cis-man. At the same time, some openly admitted it was the first time they even considered the question. It resulted in a powerful conversation, reminding us all that nothing is fixed – gender identity, like everything else, is a process of exploration and evolution."

Running Cafe Zubaan has been a labour of love for Labeeb and Jasna, and it has not been without its challenges. Bengaluru's booming restaurant scene and Zubaan's slightly off-the-beaten-path location make attracting customers a constant hurdle. Further complicating things is the unique atmosphere they've cultivated. While some customers appreciate the thought-provoking quotes and focus on conversation, others might find it intimidating.

According to Jasna, the biggest challenge is striking a balance. They need to maintain the spirit of Zubaan, the community they are building, and the open discussions they host while ensuring the cafe's financial survival. This constant juggling act can be draining, especially in the early stages. The couple finds motivation in their core values and the community they have fostered.

Asked about their vision for Zubaan, Jasna responds, "A larger space, a way to reach more people, even outside Bangalore – that's what we dream of. Because the change that happens within one person ripples outwards, affecting the entire system they're a part of. They take those new ideas and experiences back, influencing their families, friends, and communities."



Soul sustenance Labeeb Usman and Jasna Moidu (below) wanted Cafe Zubaan to be more than just good food. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Matsya Avatar to be staged today

Shilpa Anandraj

Tanariri Theatres' *Matsya Avatar* was written by Neeraja M Rajeev in English and translated to Hindi and directed by Pranav Patadiya. *Matsya Avatar,* Pranav says over a call from his home in Brookefield, is a journey of an island as it faces destruction at the hands of nature. "The play explores what the people on the island strive for and how they love and dream as the inevitable inches closer."

He and Neeraja are both from the corporate world and they founded Tanariri Theatres in 2013 for the love of theatre. "Till date, we have produced and performed seven plays in Hindi and English – *Naatak Shuru, Four Year Transform, Let's Have Sex!, The Green Room, Evam Indrajit, Aisa Kehte Hain* and *Lights Out*. "

Matysa Avatar is their eighth production and first original script, says Pranav. "The play is a reimagining of the Matsya Avatar story. Neeraja has taken the story to reflect on today's society. There is however no divine intervention in the play. Instead, the play examines the social and power structures in the society."

Matsya Avatar is a reflection on the pandemic, says Pranav.

New perspectives A still from the play; Neeraja M Rajeev and Pranav Patadiya (below). SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

He adds that his approach in terms of aesthetics was minimalistic be it the set design, costume or music. "We have used a lot of folk instruments and music. In terms of the theme, as the narrative is about the flood that is coming, the play depicts the theme of abundance in the first half and that of disappearance in the second. Our stage set and lights reflect this visually too. Since the play is about a natural crisis, nature also becomes a character."

The name of the production company was inspired by the Hindustani classical musician, Tansen. "He sang 'Raag Deepak' for Akbar. It got very hot and even Tansen was burning. That is when he sought someone who could sing 'Raag Malhaar'. Two sisters Tana and Riri, sang the *raag* to soothe Tansen. We named our company after sisters, Tanariri, because theatre soothes us."

The 33-year old Neeraja says she always wanted to be a writer. "I started as a child but did not know how to construct a play. It was in 2019 that I attended a writing workshop with Abhishek Majumdar and that is when my journey as a playwright actually began." Neeraja writes in English and Malayalam and *Matsya Avatar* is her second as a playwright. "The first was *Nerkku Ner (Face to Face)* which is a woman-centric play about sexual abuse. We are yet to bring it to production. *Matsya Avatar* was written in English, but we wanted to stage the play in Hindi as I felt it would be better in a regional language."

The play, Neeraja says, features Divya Bajpai, Kousar Nawaz Afghan, Prateek Sultania, Prakil Singh, Vipin Naik, Devashish Singbal, Gaurav Deora, Gaurav Karmakar and Mahima Rastogi.

Matsya Avatar will be staged on May 1 at MEDAI, at 3.30pm and 7.30pm. Tickets on bookmyshow

EATING OUT

Take a break from the madding crowd

Ruth Dhanaraj

Dining out has become one of the most popular ways to catch up with friends and family, and on such occasions it can be challenging to keep up with the demands of differing palates. With no dearth of watering holes in the city catering to different tastes, Nusa offers a spread that has the something-for-everyone menu going for it.

True, it might be out of the way for some, but making a picnic out of it would be a great idea, considering the setting. With multiple sections to seat parties both great and small around an open serene space, Nusa is perfect for lazy, leisurely lunches where you can sit, sip and savour the pan-Asian fare at your own pace.

The weather is frankly too hot to enjoy soup but it was Nusa's choice to showcase this particular dish and we understood why after our first taste. Tomato soup rarely falls into my must-try category anywhere, but I am glad we tried it out here. The roasted tomato butter candle soup was light and refreshing, with a generous pat of herbed butter; there is a subtle fieriness to the prawn.

Bali beach vibes Nusa offers a space to kick back and unwind. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

After gorging on starters, it was difficult to choose a main course. We finally settled on the tried and tested *nalli nihari* with butter *naan*. The meat was tender and the gravy was just the right consistency – not too thick nor too thin.

We shared a dessert – the enchanted forest came to our table with a flourish. It is one of the chef's prides and it is easy to see why.

Chocolate ganache, tuiles, soil and rocks surround a tart cherry compote. Not too sweet and not too dense, it was a lovely end to the meal. Nusa has a lot to offer – *baos, khao phat, nasi goreng* and satays with the likes of risottos, ravioli, *pulao* and *biryani* vie for your attention, to say nothing of the pizzas, burgers and sliders.

The corn chestnut dimsums arrive alongside the hummus platter, and one thing is certain – there is no dearth of vegetarian options from different cuisines at Nusa. Charcoal walnut, three-lentil carrot, feta mint and raspberry beet were the flavours of hummus that came with the platter and they all went well with the pita bread.

There are a generous choice of seafood options here, so we try the *kunafa* prawn fritters. The *kunafa* prawn is not a sweet dish – it is prawn ensconced in spun pastry, much like the ones seen in Turkish desserts. The spice component for this dish is red pepper which imparts a reason why it is on their must-try list.

Nusa
Hits: Enchanted forest, tomato butter candle soup
Misses: Hummus platter
Price for two: ₹1500 for two without alcohol

'I'm a known face in Uttara Kannada and know local issues'

Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri, who is BJP candidate from Uttara Kannada LS constituency, has accused the Congress of 'lacking developmental agenda'

INTERVIEW

Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri

B.S. Satish Kumar
SIRSI (UTTARA KANNADA)

Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri

Six-time MLA Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri, who is taking on Anjali Nimbalkar of the Congress in Uttara Kannada Lok Sabha constituency, says he is a 'known face' in the constituency and knows the local issues better due to his long association with the area.

Mr. Hegde had earlier served as Speaker of the Assembly and as Primary and Secondary Education Minister in the government of Karnataka. He is banking on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's achievements and efforts towards boosting the country's image as these are national elections.

Excerpts from the interview:

What are the main poll issues in Uttara Kannada Lok Sabha constituency?

The achievements of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the last 10 years and the manner in which he has boosted the image of the country have reached the common people here. In addition, the construction of Ram mandir too has created goodwill. These are the national elections, and not panchayat polls. But the Congress is trying to reduce the focus and dignity of these polls by resorting to advertisements about *chembu* (Congress' advertisements likening the Centre's contribution to Karnataka to an empty pot). The Congress has nothing to its credit when it comes to development works of the constituency, and people know it. Like other Malnad areas, this constituency has the age-old problem of people who have built their houses long ago not having land records in their names because it is technically forest land. The Congress is being blamed for it as it was the Congress that ruled Karnataka and the country when it happened. The Congress also failed to improve rail network for the region when in power.

Of the eight Assembly segments in this Lok Sabha constituency, two are in Belagavi district. Being a person from Uttara Kannada, how will you connect with people in Belagavi district?

Belagavi is not new to me as I had been associated with the district since 1991. I worked as Belagavi district in-charge for the BJP organisation for four years. Also as Education Minister, I have sanctioned several works for Belagavi district.

Your predecessor Ananth Kumar Hegde, who represented this Lok Sabha seat six times, is not actively campaigning after being denied the ticket. Will it make the contest tough?

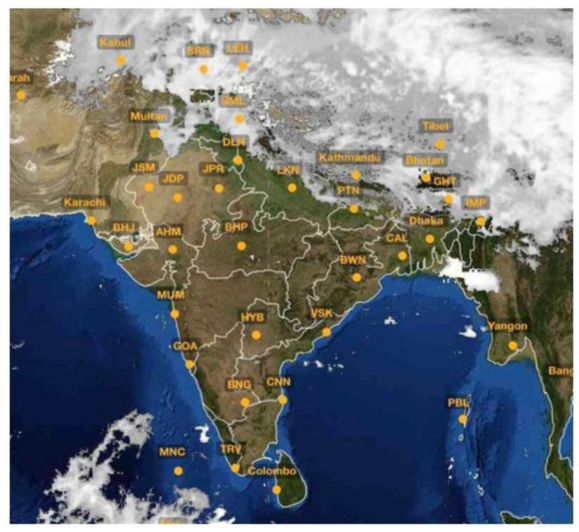
No, the votes that he got will remain with the BJP. Also, he has never opposed the party, or me.

The Congress has been banking on its guarantee schemes. What is the political influence of Congress guarantee schemes in this Lok Sabha seat?

The guarantee schemes are not being implemented effectively. They are different from what was actually promised before the polls. The fact that the Congress government has increased the cost of various service deliveries, including the power tariff and revenue transactions, had nullified the effect of guarantee schemes, as people think that they are being burdened.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Wednesday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura. Heat wave conditions likely in isolated pockets over central Maharashtra, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yanam, Telangana, interior Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, Kerala and Mahe

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	38.0	28.1	Kozhikode	—	37.8	30.0
Ahmedabad	—	40.6	26.0	Kurnool	—	44.9	29.6
Aizawl	—	—	22.6	Lucknow	—	40.1	25.0
Allahabad	—	42.3	25.4	Madurai	—	40.6	28.6
Bengaluru	—	38.2	25.2	Mangaluru	—	34.4	26.8
Bhopal	—	39.7	25.0	Mumbai	—	38.4	27.4
Bhubaneswar	—	45.4	27.0	Mysuru	—	37.8	25.0
Chandigarh	—	35.4	19.6	New Delhi	—	36.5	22.2
Chennai	—	39.4	27.7	Patna	—	42.8	30.2
Coimbatore	—	39.8	26.6	Port Blair	—	35.9	27.3
Dehradun	—	35.1	19.1	Puducherry	—	36.7	28.3
Gangtok	4	22.8	15.3	Pune	—	42.5	25.9
Goa	—	34.3	27.4	Raipur	—	42.0	28.3
Guwahati	—	34.2	22.0	Ranchi	—	40.1	27.0
Hubballi	—	40.0	24.0	Shillong	—	29.0	17.3
Hyderabad	—	41.9	28.6	Shimla	—	25.4	13.0
Imphal	2	33.1	19.3	Srinagar	24	13.2	3.0
Jaipur	—	36.8	25.3	Thiruvananthapuram	—	36.7	27.6
Kochi	—	33.8	29.0	Tiruchi	—	41.3	28.0
Kohima	1	29.0	18.6	Vijayawada	—	40.5	27.6
Kolkata	—	43.0	30.4	Visakhapatnam	—	34.2	28.7

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	6	45	—	239	165	
Bengaluru	10	17	23	97	108	
Chennai	11	15	119	24	23	
Delhi	—	321	54	184	142	
Hyderabad	24	31	12	66	99	
Kolkata	20	21	57	74	94	
Lucknow	11	66	18	305	183	
Mumbai	—	30	59	249	128	
Pune	83	99	118	93	90	
Visakhapatnam	14	54	33	49	112	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Hajipur, Bihar recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 295 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu recorded a healthy AQI score of 26

Air Quality Code: Poor, Moderate, Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

No quota for Muslims as long as I am alive: PM

Modi accuses Congress of undermining the Constitution by snatching away the rights of the marginalised sections and bringing quota for Muslims

The Hindu Bureau
ZAHEERABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy and other leaders in Zaheerabad, Telangana, on Tuesday. PTI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said here on Tuesday that as long as he "is alive, he will not allow the Indian Constitution-mandated reservation for the SC/STs and BCs to be distributed to the Muslims".

"The Constitution makers led by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had decided against religion-based quota and made it only for the SC/ST/BCs. But the Congress party and its 'prince' [Rahul Gandhi], are undermining the Indian Constitution by snatching the rights of the marginalised sections by bringing quota for the Muslims through the backdoor for their vote-bank politics," he said.

Addressing a public meeting at Zaheerabad in Telangana, Mr. Modi affirmed in an emotional tone, that his commitment and respect to the Indian Constitution is total.

Beginning his marathon hour-long speech in Telugu – *Na Telangana kutumba sabhyulandariki namaskaramulu* (Greetings to my Telangana family members), he also announced that the 75th anniversary of the Indian Constitution will be celebrated with "pomp and gaiety" throughout the country during his third term, where he will also "expose" the Congress party's efforts to "insult" and "poke holes" into it under its rule.

Attacks Rahul

He blasted Mr. Gandhi without mentioning his name, but calling him '*shehzada*', for tearing a Cabinet note prepared by the Manmohan Singh government in front of the media showing "utter disregard to constitutional propriety". "He [Rahul Gandhi] is now talking of protecting the Constitution from us? It is a holy book to me equal to the Gita, Bible or the Koran," he declared.

"Everything is fine as long as they [Congress] are in power or else they will obstruct Parliament, question the Election Commission and EVMs for vote bank politics. They are out to defame the Constitution and will go to any extent," he said. Mr. Modi accused the party of believing in five principles – "lies, vote bank politics, mafia/anti-social elements, corruption and dynasty politics" symbolising the five fingers of the hand.

INBRIEF

Kerala HC to hear ED's plea in Thomas Isaac case on May 20

A Division Bench of the Kerala High Court on Tuesday adjourned to May 20 the hearing on an appeal filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) against a single-judge interim order directing it not to summon former Kerala Finance Minister T.M. Thomas Isaac as part of its probe in a case of Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) violations in the floating of masala bonds to fund infrastructure projects.

The single judge, who passed the order on Mr. Isaac's petition, had said that the petitioner was contesting the Lok Sabha election and that it was not proper to disturb a candidate by summoning him during poll days.

Sweat and salt

Despite scorching heat, workers load salt bags from the fields along the shore in Kothapatnam village of Andhra Pradesh. KOMMURI SRINIVAS

Pawan proposes cess to raise funds for Polavaram R&R package

The Hindu Bureau
POLAVARAM

JSP supremo K. Pawan Kalyan on Tuesday proposed to impose a special cess and crowdfunding to raise funds to complete the Resettlement and Rehabilitation (R&R) component for the 1.6 lakh displaced families of Polavaram project.

Addressing the gathering in Eluru district, Mr. Pawan said, "It is a fact that completion of the Polavaram R&R package is a challenge. I will seek some financial aid from the Centre for it. The rest can be raised by imposing a special cess. However, five crore people of Andhra Pradesh need to come forward to support the proposed special cess."

Mr. Pawan has stated that barely 7,000 families among the 1.6 lakh Polavaram-displaced families have so far received the complete Resettlement and Rehabilitation package.

By 2027

Aiming at completing the R&R exercise and commissioning the project by 2027, Mr. Pawan launched a crowdfunding initiative for the R&R component by announcing ₹1 crore aid from his savings. Eluru TDP MP contestant Putta Mahesh also announced ₹1 crore aid towards the Polavaram R&R component.

TDP, JSP promise dole for unemployed, free bus rides

The Hindu Bureau
GUNTUR

The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and the Jana Sena Party (JSP) on Tuesday released a common manifesto for the 2024 general election in Andhra Pradesh. One of the main assurances in the manifesto is the creation of 20 lakh jobs in the next five years. Unemployed youth will get an allowance of ₹3,000 per month, according to the manifesto released in Guntur. It also promises interest-free loans of up to ₹10 lakh for women through self-help groups, cash benefit of ₹20,000 a year to farmers and free bus travel for women.

Revanth attacks KCR over post on OU hostel closure notice

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

A. Revanth Reddy

Equating BRS chief K. Chandrashekar Rao with Nazi-era propagandist Joseph Goebbels, Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy said that the former was spreading lies on the closure of Osmania University (OU) hostels, adding that the notice was issued as per the varsity almanac.

Taking to X, the Chief Minister shared a similar notice issued by the OU authorities last year when BRS was in power. The notice contained information on closure of hostels due to summer vacation and also mentioned that hostels were being closed due to acute shortage of power and water.

The Chief Minister in his post said that seeing KCR, it felt like Goebbels was born again. He said in May 2023, when KCR was the Chief Minister, a similar notice was issued by the university chief warden regarding summer vacations and closure of hostels.

Controversy over the closure of hostels for the summer vacation erupted after KCR shared a notice from the chief warden that hostels would be closed due to summer vacation alleging that "Telangana CM and Deputy CM were misleading people on power, irrigation and drinking water supply in the State for the last four months".

OU Vice-Chancellor D. Ravinder also clarified that the vacation was declared as per the varsity almanac.

Meanwhile, a student leader, Chanagani Dayakar, said that a 'frustrated' KCR was spreading lies. A person who has never visited the campus, has suddenly found love, he said. Another student leader, Valigonda Narasimha thanked Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka for assuring that hostels would be kept open.

Suspended assistant professor sentenced to 10 years in prison for attempted trafficking of college girls

The Hindu Bureau
SRIVILLIPUTTUR

Nirmala Devi on her way to the Fast Track Mahila Court.

A Fast Track Mahila Court on Tuesday awarded 10 years' rigorous imprisonment to Nirmala Devi, a suspended assistant professor of Devanga Arts College in Aruppukottai, in a case of attempted trafficking of college girls.

Judge T. Bagavathiammal had found Devi guilty on five counts on Monday, and had adjourned the case to Tuesday for pronouncing the sentence.

She awarded 10 years' imprisonment each on two counts - for attempting to traffic more than one person [Section 370 (3) of the Indian Penal Code], and for seduction of girls in custody [Section 9 of The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956].

The court also sentenced Devi to seven years in jail for trafficking of person [Section 370 (1) of the IPC], and five years for attempt to procure girls for the purpose of prostitution [Section 5 (1) (a) of The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956].

Further, finding her guilty under the provisions of the Information Technology Act, the court sentenced her to three years in jail. "The court has ordered that all the sentences shall be served concurrently, and hence, she would have to serve a jail term of 10 years," prosecution counsel Chandrasekar said. Ms. Bagavathiammal also imposed a fine of ₹2.42 lakh on Devi.

The Crime Branch-Criminal Investigation Department (CB-CID) had probed the case registered by the Aruppukottai Town police against Devi on charges of attempting to lure college girls into doing sexual favours for higher officials of the Madurai Kamaraj University in return for money and higher marks.

Though the CB-CID had arrested an Assistant Professor of the Madurai Kamaraj University, V. Murugan, and a research scholar, S. Karuppasamy, in connection with the case, the court had acquitted them after the prosecution witnesses turned hostile.

Poll time, prison time

Kejriwal's continuing imprisonment casts a shadow on election campaign

The continued incarceration of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the midst of a general election highlights the hard political realities that seem to determine which leader gets prosecuted or arrested on allegations of corruption. Over the decades, it has become clear that only an unfriendly regime usually pursues charges against key political rivals; and that the status of relations between the party that runs the government of the day and those facing such charges dictates the course of action for supposedly independent agencies. That the number of leaders whose offences are forgotten as soon as they join the ruling party or become an ally is increasing, while jail time is reserved for adversaries. In Mr. Kejriwal's case, there is an astounding element of politics vitiating his arrest and prosecution for allegedly taking kickbacks to formulate a liquor policy favourable to the industry. Mr. Kejriwal, who leads the Aam Aadmi Party, has been denied participation in the campaign for the general election. The adverse implications of his absence are quite obvious, even though there is no law that spares politicians from criminal liability in election time. The Delhi excise policy case was registered in August 2022. The CBI and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) have filed charge sheets, but the investigation has been continuing piecemeal. Witnesses have been giving multiple statements, with each one containing newer material.

The power to arrest a suspect exists only to prevent suspects from fleeing justice, influencing or threatening witnesses and tampering with evidence, or repeating a crime. There is a huge gulf between the power to arrest and the necessity to arrest. It is a disturbing reality that political leaders have been arrested in this case on the basis of statements made by approvers, and not any independent witnesses. The timing of the arrest has also become an issue of substance. That Mr. Kejriwal did not respond to multiple ED summonses may be cited as a reason for his being arrested now rather than months ago. However, this expectation that the accused should "cooperate" with the investigation agency is quite peculiar. Agencies ought to be able to prosecute people without their statements. It is known that Section 50 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act has been weaponised by the ED to record a statement that is admissible and then record the person's arrest. Whether non-appearance in response to a summons is a ground for arrest and denial of bail is a question that has arisen in this case. Equally tenable is the question whether arresting serving Chief Ministers through central agencies and keeping them in prison throughout a multi-phase election does not amount to subversion of federalism and democracy.

Competition, conflict

U.S. and China must manage their differences responsibly

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken's marathon talks with top officials in China, which includes President Xi Jinping, have underscored the desire of the two countries to stabilise their relationship and the resultant challenges. Mr. Blinken stressed that the U.S. would make sure that the competition between the world's two largest economies "doesn't veer into conflict". Mr. Xi said they should seek common ground "rather than engage in vicious competition". But the Blinken visit also exposed the structural fault lines in the Sino-American competition. He raised America's concerns about what he called China's "support for Russia's defence industry" and threatened actions if Beijing "doesn't address this problem". China slammed the "hypocrisy and irresponsibility" of the U.S., which just decided to send military aid worth $61 billion to Ukraine and then made "groundless accusations" against normal economic and trade exchanges between China and Russia. China also attacked the U.S. policy towards Taiwan and the South China Sea and urged Washington to look at China's development "in a positive light".

Both the U.S. and China have mutual deep misgivings. U.S. National Defence Strategy documents name China as a "revisionist power" and a pacing technological and military challenger. The U.S. has imposed export controls to limit China's growth in strategic sectors, particularly semiconductors, and imposed high tariffs on Chinese goods. It has also doubled down on its support for Taiwan and bolstered defence cooperation with the Philippines, which has disputes with China in the South China Sea. Beijing has blamed the U.S. for South China Sea tensions and called Washington's support for Taiwan as an intervention in its internal affairs. While it is practically impossible to reset ties given these structural challenges, there are areas of cooperation as well. In November 2023, when Presidents Xi and Biden met in California, both sides decided to resume bilateral military-to-military communication, cooperate in addressing the risks of artificial intelligence and launch efforts to control the production of fentanyl. Tackling climate change and global food security are also areas of cooperation. A key lesson from the Cold War is that if competition between superpowers turns ugly, it could affect the world through proxy conflicts, economic wars and diplomatic crises. As the two most powerful countries, they should stay away from repeating history. Even if they are not able to resolve their ideological and geopolitical differences, they should build the guardrails that could prevent the competition from turning ugly and stay focused on the areas of cooperation, addressing the common challenges of the world.

Make EPI an 'Essential Programme on Immunisation'

Dr. Chandrakant Lahariya

a medical doctor, has 15 years of work experience with the World Health Organization in its India Office, Regional office for Africa, Brazzaville, and Headquarters in Geneva

Dr. Rakesh Kumar

a medical doctor, is a former Joint Secretary, Reproductive and Child Health, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, and also a global health expert. He is the CEO of Wadhwani Initiative for Sustainable Healthcare (WISH), India

The year 2024 marks a significant milestone for immunisation programmes, both globally and in India. It commemorates 50 years since the launch of the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1974. The EPI was introduced as the eradication of smallpox virus was on the horizon, and a need to leverage the then immunisation infrastructure and a trained workforce was recognised to expand the benefit of available vaccines. Following the announcement, nearly every country across the world initiated its national immunisation programme. India launched the EPI in 1978, which was later renamed as the Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) in 1985. In India, this year is also two decades since the country conducted the last nationwide independent field evaluation of the UIP, in collaboration with international experts. This is an opportune moment to assess the progress made and envision the future.

Globally, and in India, there has been significant progress in terms of the impact of immunisation and vaccines. While in 1974, there were vaccines to prevent six diseases, five decades later, there are vaccines against 13 diseases which are universally recommended; and vaccines against 17 additional diseases are recommended for a context-specific situation. There is research in progress to develop vaccines against nearly 125 pathogens – many would prevent diseases prevalent in low- and middle-income countries.

A success story

The children with three doses of DPT, a tracer indicator of coverage, has been rising over these years. In the early 1970s, around 5% of children in low- and middle-income countries had received three doses of DPT, which increased to 84% in 2022 at the global level. Smallpox has been eradicated, polio eliminated from all but two countries and many vaccine preventable diseases have nearly disappeared. In India, the coverage has increased every passing year and in 2019-21, 76% of children received the recommended vaccines.

Since the launch of EPI, studies have shown that vaccines have saved millions of lives and prevented billions of hospital visits and hospitalisations. Economic analyses have estimated that vaccines are highly cost-effective interventions, with every single dollar (or rupee) of expenditure on vaccination programmes ensuring a seven to 11-fold return.

In nearly all low- and middle-income countries, including India, the immunisation programme remains a success among all government initiatives, nearly always with far greater coverage than any other health programme. Moreover, in mixed health systems with both the public and private sector delivering services, immunisation often remains the only health intervention with greater utilisation from the government sector. For instance, in India, the share of the private sector in overall health services is nearly two thirds; however, nearly 85% to 90% of all vaccines are delivered from government facilities. Experts often argue that the immunisation coverage is a tracer indicator of the possible highest coverage any government intervention can achieve in a given setting.

> In the 50 years of the Expanded Programme on Immunization, it is time for another expansion

Yet, it is not without challenges. In early 2023, the UNICEF's 'The State of the World's Children' report revealed a concerning trend: for the first time in more than a decade, the childhood immunisation coverage had declined in 2021. In 2022, globally, an estimated 14.3 million children were zero dose (did not receive any recommended vaccine) while another 6.2 million children were partially immunised. Over the years, the vaccination coverage in India has increased, both nationally and State-wise. However, there are persisting inequities in coverage by geography, socio-economic strata and other parameters, which demand urgent interventions.

From childhood focus to life course

It is interesting that when it comes to vaccination, people often (and wrongly) believe that the vaccines are only for children only. The truth is that in nearly 225 years since the availability of the first vaccine against smallpox in 1798, vaccines have always been available for individuals of all age groups, including adults. The first anti rabies vaccine, cholera, and typhoid vaccines developed between 1880s to mid 1890s were primarily for adults. The first vaccine ever developed in any part of the world against plague (in 1897) was from India and meant for individuals across all age groups. The BCG vaccine (against tuberculosis) was first introduced in a nationwide campaign in 1951 and was also administered to the adult population. Influenza vaccines have always been administered to adults and children alike. This history clearly illustrates that vaccines have always been intended for individuals of all age groups.

However, considering that children are most vulnerable from vaccine-preventable diseases, they have rightly been prioritised for vaccination. A few decades ago, the supply of vaccines was limited, and the financial resources and trained workforce that governments had were scarce. Thus, vaccines were aimed to be delivered to the population groups which would benefit from them the most – children.

However, in the last five decades, things have changed for the better. With increased vaccine coverage, children are better protected. However, diseases that are preventable with vaccines are increasingly becoming common in the adult population.

Therefore, it becomes imperative that government policies now focus on the vaccination of adults and the elderly, as well, as is happening in many countries. For better coverage of adult vaccines, we can learn from the past and five decades of the EPI.

First, there are some initial policy and technical discussions regarding expanding immunisation coverage in additional populations. The recent announcement on HPV vaccines for teenage girls is a good start.

However, the Indian government needs to consider providing recommended vaccines for a wider section of adults and elderly population. Considering that vaccines are highly cost effective, once recommended by the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization (NTAGI), vaccines for all age groups should be made available as free at the government facilities.

Second, the NTAGI in India, which provides recommendations on the use of vaccines should start providing recommendations on the use of vaccines in adults and the elderly. We need to remember that once a vaccine is recommended by the government body, the coverage is likely to be far greater than if the vaccines are not recommended by the government.

Third, the prevailing myths and misconceptions about vaccines must be proactively addressed to tackle vaccine hesitancy. The government must consider the help of professional communication agencies to dispel myths (and in a layperson's language and with the use of social media). This also requires citizens to learn and educate themselves about these vaccines from reliable sources.

Fourth, various professional associations of doctors – community medicine experts, family physicians and paediatricians should work to increase awareness about vaccines among adults and the elderly. Physicians treating patients with any disease should use the opportunity to make them aware of vaccines.

Fifth, medical colleges and research institutions should generate evidence on the burden of diseases in the adult population in India.

There are studies which have noted that the introduction of new vaccines in national programmes contributes to increased coverage of all existing vaccines. Therefore, it is likely that expanding coverage of vaccines for adults and the elderly may result in improved coverage with childhood vaccines and reduced vaccine inequities. India's EPI has made major progress and it is arguably a time for another independent national level review of the UIP in India, engaging key partners and international experts.

In late 2023, India launched a pilot initiative of adult BCG vaccination as part of efforts to 'end TB' from India. The COVID-19 vaccination of the adult population has made the public sensitized to the need for and the benefits of adult vaccination. This is a right opportunity to start a new journey of adult vaccination in India. In the 50 years of the EPI, it is time for another expansion of the programme with focus on zero dose children, addressing inequities in vaccine coverage and offering vaccines to adults and the elderly. It is time to make EPI an 'Essential Program on Immunization'.

The need for the use of labour statistics

K.R. Shyam Sundar

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The reform of labour institutions is always in the air as objective (variables) and subjective (orientation of agencies involved) factors keep changing. In the case of the industrial relations system and labour market (IRS-LM), variables such as product market, technology, trade and investment, and labour institutions such as trade unions, collective bargaining and strikes keep changing. There are two aspects of reforms – substantive issues and procedural aspects.

Social dialogue is an important procedural institutional process to debate and arrive at consensual conclusions which could be used for legal and other policy-oriented actions. In the post-reform period, the government uses social dialogue agency, *viz.*, the Indian Labour Conference (ILC), to push the reforms agenda. Evidence-based reform arguments enrich social dialogue – something which has not happened thus far. Social partners have been advocating their "class-based opinions" unbacked by credible data or experience. The ILC has degenerated into a "talking shop".

Labour statistics, unlike economic and industrial data, are not rigorous. For example, the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) and the National Sample Survey Office produce excellent statistics but have limited information relating to the IRS-LM. The Labour Bureau provides statistics on a range of industrial relations (strikes and trade unions) and labour statistics (contract labour, absenteeism, labour turnover, labour inspections). It mostly provides administrative data, *viz.*, those generated as a part of implementing labour laws. The statistics on work stoppages are collected voluntarily. The composition and the scope of data published by the Labour Bureau has remained virtually the same over the decades.

Reform arguments

Let us look at three reform arguments put forth relentlessly by employers and neoliberal academics. Employers have criticised the labour inspection system as a case of "Inspector-Raj" and called for its reforms. This criticism stems probably from their "limited experience". They have complained that State governments hardly sanction applications for retrenchment or the closure of establishments. They also demand a curb on the right to strike and prefer non-union workplaces. Some academics and global agencies such as the World Bank/International Monetary Fund which have "priors" similar to the reform opinions of employers have published studies "consistently" supporting the benevolent impact of reforms and refuting their obverse. For example, a study by Besley and Burgess (B&B) on the impact of labour regulation in 2004 has been widely used by employers and others to push hire and fire reforms, among others. This is despite glaring weaknesses in the studies using B&B methodology, original or revised. The government has fallen for these "strong prior-based evidence" hook, line and sinker and sought to introduce labour law reforms.

> Trade unions can play a pivotal role in producing labour statistics

To counter the reform arguments mentioned above, trade unions should have collected the relevant information/statistics on inspection (such as the number of sanctioned and actually employed inspectors, the universe of inspection and actual inspection, the frequency of inspections) and studied them to make informed arguments to support labour inspection – even strengthening them. It is then that social partners and the government would have realised the poor quality of data on inspections. They would realise that labour inspectors are much fewer in number than the inspection universe. Research has shown that there is no all-India data on labour inspections.

Closure reform

Again, on firing/closure reform, trade unions have not collected data on the retrenchment/closure applications under Chapter V-B submitted to the labour department, permissions granted/refused by the labour department. These are not published in most States except in Maharashtra for a limited period. The denial of permissions was surely prevalent during the command economy, but is this prevalent in the post-reform period? My study on retrenchments/closures under Chapter V-B in 2001-05 showed that Maharashtra was more liberal in granting permissions for retrenchments/closures (Impact of Labour Regulations ... in Maharashtra, Bookwell, 2008).

On strikes

The Industrial Relations Code, 2020 Code on Industrial Relations (CIR) has made legal strikes well-nigh impossible. Illegal strikes carry a heavy penalty. Trade unions could have used the data on strikes and lockouts published by the Labour Bureau which would show that lockouts are more frequent and account for more workdays lost than strikes during the post-reform period. This evidence would have challenged the need for introducing harsher clauses on strikes in the CIR.

Trade unions are well placed to "produce" statistics on several aspects of the IRS-LM at the establishment level. Employers' organisations such as NASSCOM generate statistics on the IT industry which is used indiscriminately.

India has ratified the Labour Statistics Convention (No.160), 1985 and Labour Inspection Convention (081), 1947. India must generate statistics that are valid, comprehensive and reliable on IRS-LM. Trade unions must know by now that reforms are contested not only by street struggles but also primarily in the realm of ideas where objective data and rich empirical studies are used.

In essence, trade unions should produce labour statistics, do research on IRS-LM, build an active and productive interface with academics and use academic studies to make "evidence-based arguments" in the ILC. Imagine a massive strike demanding good labour statistics! The larger society and the government are bound to stand up and seek reform labour statistics. For once, strikes would enjoy public legitimacy.

This May Day, in 2024, trade unions must resolve to carry out these measures. If nothing, statistical agencies such as the Labour Bureau will be reformed as a result of these pursuits.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Examination dates issue

The date for the All India Institute of Speech and Hearing, Mysuru's computer-based All India Entrance Examination 2024 for Bachelor of Audiology and Speech Language Pathology (B.ASLP) falls on the same day as the Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research Aptitude Test (IAT), i.e., Sunday, June 9, 2024, at 9.a.m. Many students who have completed Class 12 are now anxious on getting to know this as they want to appear and write both tests. Could the authorities/officials please look into this?

P. Murugiah,
Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu

Corrections & Clarifications

A Business page story on a Coca Cola bottler setting up a plant in Amethi (April 30, 2024) erroneously gave the name of the bottler as SLAM Beverages. It should have been SLMG Beverages.

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Implementing the Street Vendors Act

A decade has passed since the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act came into effect on May 1, 2014, marking a significant milestone after nearly four decades of legal jurisprudence and the tireless efforts of street vendor movements across India. Celebrated as a progressive legislation, the Act now faces numerous challenges in its implementation. Looking back, the mere enactment of a law did not ensure the protection and security of street vendors in Indian cities; there was much to be desired in its execution.

Aravind Unni

is an urban practitioner-researcher focusing on informal workers and urban communities' inclusion in urban planning and cities

Shalini Sinha

is the Asia strategist at the Urban Policies Program, WIEGO (Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing). Views are personal

Celebrated as a progressive legislation, the Act now faces numerous challenges in its implementation

Provisions of the law

Street vendors, estimated to constitute 2.5% of any city's population, play multifaceted roles in city life. Local vegetable sellers and food vendors are essential providers of daily services. Vending offers many migrants and the urban poor a source of modest yet consistent income. The vendors also make city life affordable for others by providing vital links in the food, nutrition, and goods distribution chain at reasonable prices.

Street vendors are also integral to Indian culture – imagine Mumbai without its *vada pav* or Chennai without its roadside *dosai*. The law was enacted to acknowledge this reality. It aimed to 'protect' and 'regulate' street vending in cities, with State-level rules and schemes, and execution by Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) through by-laws, planning, and regulation. The Act clearly delineates the roles and responsibilities of both vendors and various levels of government. It recognises the positive urban role of vendors and the need for livelihood protection. It commits to accommodating all 'existing' vendors in vending zones and issuing vending certificates. The Act establishes a participatory governance structure through Town Vending Committees (TVCs) and mandates that street vendor representatives must constitute 40% of TVC members, with a sub-representation of 33% of women street vendors. These committees are tasked with ensuring the inclusion of all existing vendors in vending zones. Additionally, the Act outlines mechanisms for addressing grievances and disputes, proposing the establishment of a Grievance Redressal Committee chaired by a civil judge or judicial magistrate. Its provisions set a crucial precedent for inclusive and participatory approaches to address street vending needs in cities, at least in theory.

Three broad challenges

However, the Act has faced three broad challenges. First, at the administrative level, there has been a noticeable increase in harassment and evictions of street vendors, despite the Act's emphasis on their protection and regulation. This is often due to an outdated bureaucratic mindset that views vendors as illegal entities to be cleared. There is also a pervasive lack of awareness and sensitisation about the Act among state authorities, the wider public, and vendors themselves. TVCs often remain under the control of local city authorities, with limited influence from street vendor representatives. And the representation of women vendors in TVCs is mostly tokenistic.

Second, at the governance level, existing urban governance mechanisms are often weak. The Act does not integrate well with the framework established by the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act for urban governance. ULBs lack sufficient powers and capacities. Schemes like the Smart Cities Mission, laden with resources and pushed through as policy priorities from the top-down, mostly focus on infrastructure development and ignore the provisions of the Act for the inclusion of street vendors in city planning.

Third, at the societal level, the prevailing image of the 'world class city tends to be exclusionary. It marginalises and stigmatises street vendors as obstacles to urban development instead of acknowledging them as legitimate contributors to the urban economy. These challenges are reflected in city designs, urban policies, and public perceptions of neighbourhoods.

The way forward

While the Act is progressive and detailed, its implementation requires support, possibly (and ironically) necessitating top-down direction and management starting from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. This needs to be decentralised over time to ensure effectiveness in addressing the diverse needs and contexts of street vendors nationwide. PM SVANidhi, a micro-credit facility for street vendors, has been a positive example in that direction. There is a strong need to decentralise interventions, enhance the capacities of ULBs to plan for street vending in cities, and move away from high-handed department-led actions to actual deliberative processes at the TVC level. Urban schemes, city planning guidelines, and policies need to be amended to include street vending.

The Act now faces new challenges such as the impact of climate change on vendors, a surge in the number of vendors, competition from e-commerce, and reduced incomes. The Act's broad welfare provisions must be used creatively to meet the emerging needs of street vendors. The sub-component on street vendors in the National Urban Livelihood Mission needs to take cognisance of the changed realities and facilitate innovative measures for addressing needs. The case of the Street Vendors Act highlights the complex interplay of contestation over space, workers in urban areas, and governance, offering valuable lessons for future lawmaking and implementation.

Impartial volunteers no longer

The YSRCP has been using village and ward volunteers for its election campaign

STATE OF PLAY

Sambasiva Rao M.
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The village and ward volunteers' system, introduced by Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy in 2019 in Andhra Pradesh to bridge the gap between the government and citizens, has become deeply politicised, with the Opposition accusing the ruling YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) of using the volunteers as its foot soldiers.

At its core, the system aimed to decentralise governance by appointing local residents as volunteers to oversee implementation of government welfare programmes. Each volunteer is assigned to 50 households and is responsible for ensuring the transparent delivery of services such as social security pensions and essential commodities. For their work, volunteers are paid a monthly sum of ₹5,000 each as honorarium. There are 2,62,483 volunteers, as per government data.

Essentially, the volunteer system aims to bring governance to the people's doorstep. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the volunteers became the backbone of Andhra Pradesh's response efforts. They distributed masks, facilitated the transportation of patients to healthcare facilities, and conducted household surveys to monitor the health status of every family. Their tireless efforts earned them praise from various sections of society and showed the potential of community-driven governance in times of crisis.

But as elections loomed on the horizon, allegations of misuse and manipulation began to surface. The Opposition accused the YSRCP of exploiting the volunteer network to sway voters in its favour. It raised concerns about the lack of impartiality, claiming that the volunteers had turned into assets for the ruling party for its electoral campaign. This claim was substantiated by the fact that more than 60,000 volunteers resigned from their posts and officially began working with the YSRCP to help it during its campaign. It was clear that the party hoped to use the volunteers' familiarity with the people at the grassroots to its advantage.

Following complaints by Opposition parties in various districts, District Election Officers suspended a number of volunteers. Later, based on a writ petition filed by Dr. Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar, Secretary, Citizens for Democracy (CFD) of Andhra Pradesh, the Andhra Pradesh High Court barred volunteers from participating in the distribution of welfare schemes after the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) was put in place. Mr. Ramesh Kumar is a retired Indian Administrative Service officer who served as State Election Commissioner. The court ruling was met with both praise and criticism: while some lauded it as a necessary safeguard against electoral malpractice, others claimed that it created obstacles in the delivery of services.

Based on the court orders, the Election Commission of India (ECI) instructed the State government to bar volunteers from delivering government services for as long as the MCC was in place. Following this, Chief Secretary K.S. Jawahar Reddy instructed the village and ward secretariat staff to disburse the money and asked pensioners to collect it from the respective offices. However, later, as per the directions of the ECI, the State government said it would disburse pensions through Direct Beneficiary Transfer to up to 75% of the pensioners. The rest would receive it at their doorstep during May and June, it said.

While the plan seemed to work on paper, in reality it turned into a tragedy. Some of the pensioners died, allegedly because they stood in the heat for hours to collect their due. This expectedly led to a controversy. Mr. Jagan Reddy and other YSRCP leaders blamed the CFD and the National Democratic Alliance for the deaths, while Telugu Desam Party national president N. Chandrababu Naidu and other Opposition leaders faulted the State government, claiming that it wilfully avoided employing village and ward secretariat staff to disburse pensions at beneficiaries' homes.

Based on multiple complaints that volunteers are influencing voters at the grassroots level, the Andhra Pradesh High Court asked the ECI to take action. The ECI has barred the volunteers from distributing cash benefits under any scheme, including pensions. The YSRCP continues to staunchly defend the volunteer system and claims that it is being politicised. This entire episode could have been avoided if the volunteers were merely allowed to do their duty and were not appropriated by the YSRCP for its own political gain.

Cost of meals rose by 71% in five years, salaries by just 37%

This disparity means that households with regular salaried people might be cutting back on spending on non-essential items or luxury products

DATA POINT

Sruthi Balaji
& Vignesh Radhakrishnan

The average cost of a home-cooked vegetarian thali in Maharashtra increased by 71% in the last five years. At the same time, the average monthly salary earned by a person through regular employment in the State increased by only 37%. While the wages of casual labourers kept pace with the rise in prices, increasing by 67% in the period, it is crucial to note that labourers were already spending a high share of their monthly wages on food.

For this analysis, it has been assumed that an average Indian family will be able to meet their daily dietary needs if they consume food equivalent to two thalis per day, spread across breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Non-vegetarian meals were not considered due to lack of past data. To get commodity prices, Maharashtra was chosen as an exemplar due to the availability of consistent data. The average wages and salaries of workers in Maharashtra were considered for comparison.

To decode how much two thalis cost, on average, in Maharashtra, the ingredients used were identified – white rice, toor dal, onion, garlic, green chilli, ginger, tomato, potato, peas, atta, cabbage, sunflower oil, and salt– and the grams required for two servings were measured. The average retail cost for buying those ingredients in Maharashtra – as of March this year, a year ago (2023), and five years ago (2019) – were collated from the Consumer Affairs Ministry and the National Horticulture Board. For some vegetables, for which data were not available, prices in Mumbai were considered as a proxy.

For instance, the cost of buying 125 grams of toor dal, which is required to make two thalis, increased from ₹9.3 to ₹20.1 in the past five years **(Table 1)**. Similarly, the cost of buying 300 grams of potato increased from ₹6.8 to ₹8.6.

The average cost of all the ingredients for two thalis in Maharashtra totalled ₹79.2 this year, ₹64.2 last year, and ₹46.2 in 2019 **(Table 2).** In essence, the cost of making two thalis in a household in Maharashtra every day of a month increased from ₹1,386 in 2019 to ₹2,377 in 2024.

The daily average wage of an individual in Maharashtra increased from ₹218 a day in 2019 to ₹365 a day in 2024. This was then extrapolated for 30 days to arrive at monthly earnings. The average salary of a person in Maharashtra increased from ₹17,189 to ₹23,549 in the same period.

The cost of making two thalis every day of a month, when considered as a share of wages/salaries, marginally increased from 21.1% of a casual labourer's monthly earnings in 2019 to 21.7% in 2024. This is assuming that the labourer got paid on all days, including rest days. In the case of regular salaried workers, there was a considerable increase from 8.1% to 10.1% in the same period **(Table 4).**

As can be seen from Tables 2 and 3, while the cost of making a thali increased by 71% in the past five years, the monthly salary increased by only 37%. As can be seen from Tables 3 and 4, while casual labourers' wages kept pace with the rise in prices, they were already spending over 20% of their earnings on food, the cost of which also went up marginally.

This disparity between salaries and expenditure means that households with regular salaried people might be cutting back on spending on non-essential items and luxury products. For daily wage-earning households, such spending anyway remained elusive as their expenditure on food was high and has now marginally gone up.

Sruthi Balaji is interning with The Hindu Data Team

Food has become more expensive

The tables are constructed based on data sourced from the Department for Consumer Affairs, National Horticulture Board, Periodic Labour Force Survey, and Report on District Level Estimates for the State of Maharashtra

^ Sunflower oil All figures in ₹ except those in Column A (grams)

Table 1: The table lists the weight of commodities required to prepare two thalis and its retail prices in ₹

Item	A: Grams needed for 2 thalis	B: Cost of a kg. (March 2024)	C: Cost (1 year ago)	D: Cost (5 years ago)	Buying price (March) (B*A/1000)	Buying price (1 year ago) (C*A/1000)	Buying price (5 years ago) (D*A/1000)
Rice	125	51.12	43.12	35.83	6.4	5.4	4.5
Atta(wheat)	250	42.74	41.1	30.03	10.7	10.3	7.5
Oil^	36.3	119.92	150.39	90.71	4.4	5.5	3.3
Tomato	100	28.28	20.78	25.56	2.8	2.1	2.6
Onion	100	26.01	22.04	14.3	2.6	2.2	1.4
Salt	12.8	23.43	23.39	16	0.3	0.3	0.2
Potato	300	28.65	25.07	22.55	8.6	7.5	6.8
Toor dal	125	160.99	119.94	74.23	20.1	15.0	9.3
Garlic	25	238.7	100.87	43.04	6.0	2.5	1.1
Green chilli	25	102.61	57.83	68.7	2.6	1.4	1.7
Ginger	7.5	163.04	80	86.09	1.2	0.6	0.6
Peas	60	76.52	46.96	37.83	4.6	2.8	2.3
Cabbage	250	36.09	34.35	20	9.0	8.6	5.0

Table 2: The table shows the cost of a thali in ₹ in March 2024, a year ago, and five years ago

All figures in ₹

Cost	As on March 2024	1 year ago	5 years ago
Cost of making two thalis	79.2	64.2	46.2
Cost of making one thali	39.6	32.1	23.1
Cost of making two thalis every day for a month	2,377.4	1,925.7	1,386.7

Table 3: Average daily wage of a casual labourer and the average salary of a regular salaried employee in urban Maharashtra

All figures in ₹

Average earnings in Maharashtra	As on March	1 year ago	5 years ago
Average wage earnings of a person per day from casual labour work other than public works in CWS*	364.93	328.24	218.35
Average salary earnings of a person during the preceding calendar month from regular wage/salaried employment in CWS*	23,549.45	21,810.82	17,189.56

**CWS: Current Weekly Status provides a snapshot of a person's employment during a particular reference week*

Table 4: The table shows the cost of making two thalis every day for a month as a share of monthly wages/salaries

All figures in %

	As on March	1 year ago	5 years ago
The cost of making two thalis every day for a month, when considered as a share of daily wage	21.72%	19.55%	21.15%
The cost of making two thalis every day for a month, when considered as a share of regular salary	10.10%	8.82%	8.06%

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 1, 1974

Central Government employees to go on strike

New Delhi, April 30: The Confederation of Central Government Employees and Workers to-day directed its Class III and IV employees all over the country to go on an indefinite strike from May 10. The Confederation, which claims to represent over seven lakh employees, called upon its members, who include those belonging to the Posts and Telegraphs Department, Audit, Income Tax and several other departments, excluding the Defence Services and Railways to commence the strike at 6 a.m. The strike will be preceded by a two-day "non-cooperation movement" from May 8 in the form of mass casual leave, work-to-rule, tool-down and pen-down to coincide with the threatened strike by railwaymen, Mr. S.K. Vyas, Secretary-General of the Confederation, said in a press statement. He added that this action would continue till the demands, already submitted to the Finance Minister and the respective Heads of Departments, were conceded. The demands included parity in pay scales with the public sector undertakings, a need-based minimum wage and bonus. The statement said the affiliates of the Confederation including the National Federation of P and T employees and the All-India Non-Garetted Audit and Accounts Association, had meetings of their policymaking bodies here from April 27 to 29. They held a joint meeting to-day at which the decision to go on strike was taken.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 1, 1924

Broadcasting in Madras

A Broadcasting concert took place for an hour this forenoon in the office of Messrs Milton & Co, Mount Road, next to Simpson and Coy. Some songs playing on Piano and a short speech were transmitted from the premises to the Gramaphone Department of Messrs. Spencer Buildings where the receiving appratus was fixed. The concert was well attended by Europeans and Indians. It was very much appreciated by those present and was voted a success. Mr. Coningsby, the Marconi Engineer, is in communication with Mr. Weston of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore where there is a receiving apparatus and has requested the Institute to receive the programme that is going on in Madras.

From Page One

ED told to come clean on timing of arrest

Justice Khanna explained that Mr. Kejriwal's defence was focussed on the circumstances of his arrest as getting bail would be hard under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. Under Section 19 (the ED's power to arrest), the onus was on the agency to show reasonable basis and material to prove an accused person's guilt. Whereas, under Section 45 (bail under PMLA), the burden shifts to the accused to *prima facie* convince a court that he was innocent.

Earlier in the hearing, Mr. Singhvi pointed out that an arrest in a PMLA case could only be effected if the investigating officer had reason to believe the "guilt" of the accused. "An arrest cannot happen on the basis of suspicion. The threshold is very high," the senior lawyer contended.

He said the arrest of Mr. Kejriwal was based on hearsay and statements that accused-turned-approvers had made after their arrest. Though none of their earlier statements had named Mr. Kejriwal, these were suppressed by the agency.

One of the accused, Sarath Reddy, had earlier refused to name Mr. Kejriwal. The ED had objected to his plea for interim bail though his wife was unwell. His request for bail, however, sailed through after he made a statement implicating Mr. Kejriwal. A similar train of events happened with another accused, Raghav Magunta. "Once the statement (naming the CM is made), the ED's opposition suddenly turns into benevolence," Mr. Singhvi said. He said Mr. Magunta and his father were contesting the elections. "It was a farce... turning approvers and all," he added.

'No evidence'

He stressed that there was not a shred of evidence on the money trail or the proceeds of crime under Section 3 of the PMLA. The statement of Mr. Kejriwal under Section 50 of the PMLA was not recorded before his arrest. On the allegations that money was spent on the Goa election campaign, Mr. Singhvi said neither was AAP made a party in this case nor did the ED claim that the money was crime proceeds that passed through Mr. Kejriwal into the party coffers.

The Supreme Court questioned the continuous flow of complaints from the initiation of proceedings. It noted that Section 8 of the PMLA required the investigation to be completed at the most in 365 days. The court asked the ED which facts of AAP leader Manish Sisodia's case were relevant to Mr. Kejriwal's case.

SC slams IMA chief's remarks about court

The IMA had complained to the court about the blatant disregard shown by Patanjali to the Supreme Court and the field of allopathic medicine.

In the last hearing, on April 23, the Bench had turned to the IMA and said it would look into the phenomenon of inflated bills and doctors allegedly prescribing over-priced medicine brands in cahoots with pharmaceutical companies.

Mr. Rohatgi drew the court's attention to Mr. Asokan's interview in which he had said it was "unfortunate" for the court to have criticised the IMA. He had reportedly said the "vague and generalised statements" had demoralised private doctors. The senior lawyer repeatedly pointed to the part where Mr. Asokan was quoted to have said that "it does not behove the Supreme Court to take a broadside against the medical profession of the country which after all sacrificed so many lives for the Covid war".

Mr. Asokan had been replying to a query about the court's observations in a hearing that when it was pointing one finger at Patanjali, the remaining four fingers were pointed towards IMA.

Mr. Rohatgi sought an exemption for Mr. Ramdev and Mr. Balkrishna from appearing in court. The Bench allowed them a respite for the next date of hearing alone.

Turnout data update without total voter count leads to row

Opposition flags issue after EC shares turnout numbers several days after two phases; CPI(M) says fears over manipulation of results remain as voter numbers can be altered at the time of counting

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

More than 10 days after Phase 1 and four days after Phase 2 of polling for the ongoing general elections, the Election Commission (EC) released the final voter turnout figures for the two rounds on April 30. While Phase 1 saw a turnout of 66.14%, for Phase 2, it was 66.7%.

However, the poll body did not release the total number of voters in each constituency. The Opposition parties, which had earlier in the day raised this issue majorly on social media platforms, pointed this out after the EC released the data.

Polling was held in 102 constituencies on April 19 under Phase 1, while 88 seats went to the polls on April 26 in Phase 2.

In Phase 1, the turnout of male voters was 66.22% while that of women electors was 66.07%. The corresponding figures for Phase 2 were 66.99% and 66.42%, according to a statement from the EC on Tuesday.

The Opposition also expressed worry over the 5.75% jump in voter turnout between initial numbers and final figure for phase 2. AFP

During the last general elections in 2019, the first phase final turnout was shared two days after the voting. The turnout for the first phase in 2019 was 69.43% and for the second phase was 69.44%.

Both phases have shown a dip in voting percentages.

Seeks transparency

After the EC released the figures, CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury posted on X: "Finally ECI has put out the final voter turnout figures for the first 2 phases which are substantially, not marginally as is normal, higher than the initial figures. But why are the absolute numbers of voters in each parliamentary constituency not put out? Percentages are meaningless unless this figure is known."

"Apprehensions of manipulation of results continue as total voter numbers can be altered at the time of counting. Total number of voters in each constituency was always available on ECI website till 2014! ECI must be transparent and put out this data".

Trinamool Congress leader Derek O'Brien said: "Four days after Phase 2 ends, Election Commission releases final voting figures. A bump up (jump in turnout) of 5.75% from what EC released 4 days ago! Is this normal? What am I missing here?"

Earlier in the day, Opposition leaders questioned the delay in sharing of data by the EC. In a post on X, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said: "For the first time, even 11 days after the first phase of the polls and four days after the second phase, the final voter turnout has not been published by the ECI. In the past, ECI used to publish the final voter turnout immediately after voting or within 24 hours. Only approximate polling figures are available on ECI's website. What accounts for this delay?"

"Additionally, the number of registered voters in each Lok Sabha constituency and the Assembly constituencies included in that Lok Sabha constituency is also not available on the Commission's website," he posted on X.

Mr. Yechury also pointed out that the delay in the release of data was "very disturbing". "This raises serious apprehensions on manipulation of results," he said.

SC raps Uttarakhand licensing authority in Patanjali case

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Licensing body was criticised for cancelling 14 licences of Divya Pharmacy only after SC intervention

The Supreme Court on Tuesday expressed dissatisfaction at the Uttarakhand State Licensing Authority, saying it only "woke up" and moved against Patanjali Ayurved and its co-founder Baba Ramdev like "lightning" for repeated violations committed under the Drugs and Magic Remedies Act after the court intervened and passed orders.

A Bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Ahsanuddin Amanullah were not impressed by the authority's affidavit which said it had, on April 15, suspended the manufacturing licences of Divya Pharmacy and Patanjali Ayurved Ltd. for 14 products – Swasari Gold, Swasari Vati, Bronchom, Swasari Pravahi, Swasari Avaleh, Mukta Vati Extra Power, Lipidom, Bp Grit, Madhugrit, Madhunashini Vati Extra Power, Livamrit Advance, Livogrit, Eyegrit Gold and Patanjali Drishti Eye Drop – under Rule 159 (1) of The Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945.

"This is something you should have done as a routine. So, if you want to, you can move like lightning. Otherwise, you simply do not," Justice Kohli addressed senior advocate Dhruv Mehta, who appeared for the State Licensing Authority (SLA).

"It was only after our order that you [SLA] realised that there is a law – Drugs and Magic Remedies Act. You were oblivious of it till then. Now, you wake up and realise you have power... Why were you in limbo for nearly six years?" Justice Kohli asked.

Justice Amanullah said the SLA has "shot from the court's shoulders".

Dr. Mithilesh Kumar, Joint Director State Licensing Authority, Ayurvedic and Unani Services, tendered an unconditional apology to the Court. However, the court took exception to Mr. Kumar's submission that the SLA had been "vigilant in its duties".

The Bench gave the SLA another 10 days to file fresh affidavits.

The case was posted for hearing on May 14.

Summons to Revanth another nail in coffin of fair polls: Congress

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the Delhi Police summons to Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy in connection with an alleged doctored video of Union Home Minister Amit Shah that was being circulated on social media.

The Delhi Police, which come under the Ministry of Home Affairs, had asked Mr. Reddy, also the Telangana Congress chief, to join the investigation on Wednesday.

In a post on X, Congress's general secretary Jairam Ramesh said the summons to Mr. Reddy was yet another nail in the coffin of free and fair elections. "The moment Congress leaders make posts critical of the BJP, the Prime Minister advances the police to knock at their doors. Meanwhile, the Delhi Police is quiet while the BJP creates and circulates fake videos of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh," he wrote.

He said the summons clearly underlined the desperation of the BJP after its lacklustre performance in the first two phases of the Lok Sabha election.

"Is the PM afraid that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy will torpedo his party's prospects in a free and fair election?" he asked.

Mr. Ramesh further accused the Prime Minister of withholding Central funds to Telangana. "The PM has made a habit of neglecting States that reject him at Assembly polls," he said in his post.

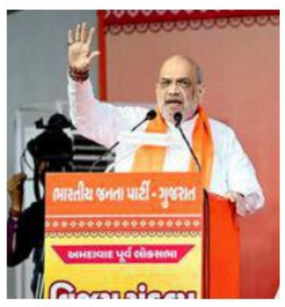
The Union government, he said, was yet to release to the State ₹4,000 crore of GST compensation, ₹24,205 crore recommended by NITI Aayog, and the ₹1,800 crore grant for the development of backward districts.

Gujarat Police arrest two Congress, AAP workers over 'doctored' video of Shah

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Two more persons, political functionaries from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Congress party, were arrested on Tuesday in Gujarat for allegedly posting a "doctored video" of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's April 23 speech in Telangana regarding reservation. A day ago, the Assam Police arrested Reetam Singh, a lawyer at the Gauhati High Court working as the Congress's Assam war room coordinator.

Mr. Shah appealed for information on the people who were disseminating the doctored video. "If you come across any such fake video anywhere, please inform us about the details of the disseminator. We will take strict action against the culprits," the Minister said in a post on X.



Amit Shah

"The Congress has now resorted to misleading citizens with fake videos out of panic and fear of defeat. The right to reservations in the country belongs to SC, ST and OBC brothers and sisters, and as long as the BJP government is in office, no one can change it. The INDIA Alliance has given reservations to Muslims, reducing the share of SCs, STs and OBCs. Congress is misleading people by editing a speech of mine in which I committed to abolishing the unconstitutional reservations for Muslims. Directions have been issued to the police to address this issue as per the law," Mr. Shah said.

Since Sunday, the police in Delhi, Assam, Maharashtra and Gujarat have filed four separate cases in connection with the video. Most persons named in the first information reports (FIRs) were Opposition party workers who shared the post on social media platforms X and Facebook. The police are yet to arrest the person who created the video.

While in the doctored video, Mr. Shah was heard saying the BJP intended to eradicate reservations for SCs, STs, and OBCs, in the original video, he said the party intended to remove the 4% reservation for Muslims in Telangana. The Delhi Police have issued summons to Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy as the video was shared from the Telengana Congress's handle as well.

Congress govt. failed to act on Revanna issue: Shah

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday slammed the Congress government in Karnataka for its alleged failure to take action against Janata Dal(S) MP Prajwal Revanna, grandson of former PM H.D. Deve Gowda, who has been accused of sexually exploiting a large number of women with hundreds of explicit video clips in circulation allegedly showing these assaults.

The JD(S) is part of the BJP-led NDA, and Mr. Revanna is the its candidate from Hassan, which went to the polls on April 26. Mr. Shah told journalists that the Karnataka government should be held accountable for not taking action in the Revanna case. "The Congress, which is running the government in Karnataka, is trying to blame us... Why has it not taken action so far?" he said.

CBI chargesheet notes Manipur govt. did not sanction charges of 'enmity'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Manipur government had not granted sanction to prosecute the accused under Section 153A for promoting enmity among different groups on the grounds of race, at the time the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) filed its chargesheet in the Manipur case of gang rape and sexual assault and parading of two Kuki-Zo women by a mob of the Meitei community in the first few days of the ethnic conflict in the State.

The chargesheet also revealed that the CBI had not made any fresh arrests in the case apart from the six accused first arrested by the Manipur Police after videos of the incident went viral on social media months after it had happened. It also added that three of the accused in the case, identified by the two victims, were still absconding.

The State has not replied to questions about whether the sanciton has been granted.

The chargesheet, filed in October 2023, five months after the incident, said that the federal probe agency was awaiting sanction to prosecute the accused under Section 153A of the Indian Penal Code (promoting enmity between groups on grounds of race, religion, etc.) as required by provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

The Manipur government has not responded to questions about whether the prosecution sanction has been granted yet.

The CBI's chargesheet in the case, which has now become public, concluded that the accused persons conspired with a large number of unidentified people of the Meitei community to execute a series of pre-planned crimes, including violence, arson, sexual assault, and murder, which specifically targetted the tribal community.

This particular case from May 4 came to light only months later when a video of the incident, recorded by the perpetrators, went viral on social media and public outrage forced the Police to register a First Information Report (FIR). The case was then transferred to the CBI by the Supreme Court, along with other similar cases of sexual assault that occurred during the ongoing conflict in Manipur.

The agency added that the law and order situation in the State, given the ethnic conflict, was such that it was forced to conduct the Test Identification Parade (TIP) by showing photographs of the accused to the victims.

Women block Army contingent moving weapons in Manipur

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Eleven armed miscreants dressed in police uniform were intercepted by the Mahar regiment of the Army in Manipur's Bishnupur district around 2.30 a.m. on Tuesday.

A cache of three AK series of rifles, 5 INSAS, 2 SLR rifles, two hand grenades, over 600 rounds of ammunition and bulletproof jackets were recovered from their possession, the Manipur Police said.

Later in the day, around hundred women blocked the Army contingent carrying the weapons seized from the armed miscreants. The Army opened fire in the air to disperse the women who were demanding that the seized weapons be returned.

"On being informed by the Army about the developing situation, District Police rushed to the spot. On reaching, it was informed by the Army personnel that the 11 persons have been snatched by the womenfolk during aggressive confrontation with them despite their best efforts," the police said.

However, teams of both Manipur Police and the Army could reach out to the the teams at Kumbi police station. The recovered weapons were kept in safe custody. "The mob was later dispersed and the situation was brought under control," the police said.

Khurshid, niece booked for 'vote jihad' appeal

Press Trust of India
FARRUKHABAD

The Uttar Pradesh Police on Tuesday booked Congress leader Salman Khurshid and his niece Maria Alam after she called for a "vote jihad" in favour of the INDIA bloc candidate Naval Kishore Shakya from the Farrukhabad seat.

Seeking votes for Mr. Shakya, Ms. Alam, of Samajwadi Party, made the appeal, terming it as necessary in the current situation for the minority community to drive away the BJP government. While a case was registered against her, Mr. Khurshid was added to case as he was the chief guest at the event.

APPEAL

Kanishkasri aged 6 years is advised to undergo Complex Open Heart Surgery (Hemi Mustard + Rasteli Precedure) at The Madras Medical Mission, Chennai. The total expenditure is **Rs. 5,35,000/-**. Her family is very poor and cannot afford this huge cost. Please help her to undergo the surgery and lead a healthy life. The donations sent through Ch/D.D/NEFT Transfer & Google Pay (Canara Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/C. No:60182010063310, IFSC No: CNRB0016018) favouring **WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE** is exempted under 80G IT.

All correspondence is done through **WWS**, Regd Public Charitable Trust, **FlatNo.GF1,Corddel Apartments,O.No.13,N.No.29,PycroftsGarden Lane, Chennai - 600006. Ph: 044-42137401/28235324/7338978027. E Mail ID: womenswelfaresyndicate@gmail.com.** Website: www.womenswelfaresyndicate.org.

WWS

ELECTIONS 2024

Modi writes to NDA's Phase 3 candidates

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday wrote letters to all NDA candidates in the fray in the third phase of the Lok Sabha election, asking them to take on the Congress's "divisive agenda" of giving reservation to Muslims by snatching it from the SCs, the STs, and the OBCs, and "dangerous ideas" like bringing in inheritance tax.

Stressing that the current polls were "no ordinary election", he said: "They [Opposition] are bent upon taking away the hard-earned wealth of the people and giving it to their vote bank. The Congress has also made it clear that they will bring in dangerous ideas like inheritance tax. The nation must unite to stop them."

"I send you my wishes for your victory in the election", the Prime Minister said.

Modi asked the candidates to take on the Congress's 'divisive' agenda. AFP

Congress names candidates for Haryana, H.P.

The Congress on Tuesday fielded actor-turned-politician Raj Babbar from the Gurgaon Lok Sabha seat in Haryana, and former Union Minister Anand Sharma from Kangra in Himachal Pradesh.

Satpal Raizada, a former MLA from Himachal Pradesh's Una, has been fielded by the party from the Hamirpur Lok Sabha seat in the State, and will contest the election against BJP candidate and Union Minister Anurag Thakur.

Mr. Sharma, who has been a prominent member of the G-23 grouping within the Congress, which raised questions on the party's leadership, will take on the BJP's State vice-president Rajiv Bhardwaj from the Kangra seat.

The BJP has replaced its sitting MP Kishan Kapoor with Mr. Bhardwaj this time. PTI

> Like dinosaurs became extinct, Cong. will also become extinct. After years, if names are mentioned in front of children, they will ask what is Congress
>
> **RAJNATH SINGH**
> Defence Minister

Repoll peaceful in six booths in Outer Manipur

Repolling concluded in six booths of the Outer Manipur constituency on Tuesday, completing voting for the Lok Sabha poll in the State. Repoll was ordered for 17 polling stations. Chief Electoral Officer told *The Hindu* that repolling was peaceful with a turnout of 81.16%.

> Amit Shah has claimed at a meeting that we have not sent utilisation certificates ₹2.2 crore spending by our govt. I challenge him to prove it
>
> **MAMATA BANERJEE**
> West Bengal Chief Minister

First pick: Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray addressing a public meeting for the Lok Sabha election, in Solapur on Monday. PTI

For Muslims in Maharashtra, Uddhav's Sena emerges as 'right choice'

Nistula Hebbar
MUMBAI/NASHIK

The paradigm shift that occurred in Maharashtra politics in 2019, when the then united Shiv Sena walked out of the NDA to form the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government in the State, along with the Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), is perhaps best exemplified by the fact that leaders of the Muslim community are now looking at Uddhav Thackeray's faction as its most likely bet in the Lok Sabha election, even from among the MVA constituents.

According to Ghulam Arif, convener of the "Community Talking" platform, a debating group among the Muslim community in Maharashtra, it has not been an easy journey. For the community, which felt alienated from the Shiv Sena before the 1992 riots, the Sena (UBT) has become the first choice among its voters, sometimes even over the Congress, as its relative strength makes it a more formidable opponent to the BJP.

"Currently, there is an existential crisis in the Muslim community, which fears that a return of the BJP may lead to erosion of constitutional rights of minorities. Any reservation that Muslims have about the Sena (UBT) is superseded by this sense of crisis," he said.

"Unlike Muslims in the Konkan belt, where society is better integrated on religious lines, Mumbai Muslims had felt alienated by the Shiv Sena," he added. Muslims comprise nearly 10.6% of the population and are largely in the urban centres and some areas in the Konkan region.

However, none of the MVA constituents have fielded any Muslim candidate in this Lok Sabha election, a fact that has led to the resignation of Maharashtra Congress working president Arif Naseem Khan.

Farid Khan, socio-political activist and convener of Urdu Karavan, an organisation devoted to the promotion of Urdu, does point out to the lack of positive affirmation when politicians come to solicit support.

"We are literally like a barren field, which is to be ring-fenced but nothing is to be spent to cultivate it," said Mr Khan. In fact, a few days back, Rais Khan, Samajwadi Party (SP) MLA from Bhiwandi (East), who recently also quit the party over differences, held a meeting of Muslim community members exhorting them to vote for the MVA constituents as an "extraordinary" situation was prevailing in the country.

Mr. Khan, however, does add that the two years of the MVA saw not just the pandemic but also the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) protests, and that both challenges were handled by the then government "keeping everyone's sensitivities in mind".

In Western Maharashtra, Shabbir Ansari, the founding president of the All India Muslim OBC organisation, said that apart from tactical reasons, the Muslim community, especially OBCs among Muslims, was heartened by the promise of a caste census promised by the MVA constituents.

The Assembly election, just a few months away, will be the real test, but for now, for the Muslim community, the Sena (UBT) has emerged as the "right choice".

Splitting of parties, clan prestige loom large ahead of Phase 3 in Maharashtra

The *Mahayuti* alliance is straining every sinew to obliterate the influence of the Maha Vikas Aghadi coalition in the seats; prestige of Maharashtra's most influential political clans — the Pawars, the Ranes, the Shindes, the Tatkares — hang in the balance in a string of high-profile contests

OVERVIEW

Shoumojit Banerjee
PUNE

The upheaval in Maharashtra's politics following vertical splits within the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the Shiv Sena, coupled with clan rivalry and conflicts within the ruling and Opposition alliances, looms large in the third phase of the Lok Sabha election.

Like a John le Carré Cold War thriller, the principals on these 11 Lok Sabha seats (including those in the prosperous 'sugar belt' districts), which go to the polls on May 7, have switched sides with bewildering rapidity, rendering the contest in this phase unpredictable owing to the personality-centric politics that have prevailed here.

Amid a maze of byzantine intrigue, the prestige of State's most influential political clans – the Pawars (Baramati), the Ranes (Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg), the Shindes (Solapur), and the Tatkares (Raigad) – hangs in the balance in a string of high-profile contests.

The ruling *Mahayuti* alliance (the BJP along with Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena and Ajit Pawar's NCP faction) is straining every sinew to obliterate the influence of the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) coalition in these seats – the Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP) in Baramati, Madha, and Satara; the Uddhav Thackeray-led Sena (UBT) in Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg, Raigad, and Dharashiv; and the Congress in Latur, Solapur, Kolhapur and Sangli.

The Baramati Lok Sabha fight is microcosmic of the third phase, where one of the keenest electoral showdowns in the country has political rookie Sunetra Pawar (the *Mahayuti*'s candidate) squaring-off against her sister-in-law Supriya Sule, seeking re-election for the fourth time.

After Ajit Pawar's adhesion to the ruling alliance in 2023, the BJP finally sees a chance in storming the hitherto impregnable bastion of the Pawar clan, long considered the saffron party's holy grail in its mission to win 45 of the State's 48 Lok Sabha seats.

Pawar clash

Both Ajit Pawar and his uncle Mr. Sharad Pawar have indulged in frantic canvassing for their respective candidates, with Mr. Ajit Pawar holding out the lure of Central funds flowing directly to Baramati in the future, while the 83-year-old Mr. Pawar senior uses his emotional pull to combat his rebellious nephew.

Though in his twilight years, Mr. Sharad Pawar, with his deft manoeuvring, has made things tough for the BJP-*Mahayuti* in Madha (in Solapur) by weaning away the politically influential Mohite-Patil clan from the BJP over to his side and fielding Dhairyasheel Mohite-Patil as the MVA's candidate.

Mr. Mohite-Patil takes on the BJP's sitting Madha MP Ranjitsinh Naik-Nimbalkar.

In the Konkan, things are not exactly balmy for the BJP and the Shinde faction of the Sena as Union Minister Narayan Rane, fielded from the key Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg seat, risks political oblivion if he loses the contest against the Sena (UBT) candidate, incumbent MP Vinayak Raut. The seat was a fierce bone of contention between the BJP and its ally, the Shinde faction of the Sena.

In Raigad, Mr. Ajit Pawar's lieutenant and sitting MP, the NCP's Sunil Tatkare, faces a tough fight as he squares off with his old rival, former Union Minister and Sena (UBT) leader Anant Geete, whom he had beaten in the 2019 Lok Sabha Election by a thin margin.

Shivaji's descendants

In the sugar heartland of Satara and Kolhapur, the *Mahayuti* and the MVA have fielded direct descendants of the legendary Maratha warrior king Chhatrapati Shivaji.

Udayanraje Bhosale (the 13th direct descendant of Shivaji) is the BJP's choice for Satara, while Shahu Chhatrapati (Shivaji's 12th direct descendant) is the MVA's choice for Kolhapur.

The selection makes strategic sense given the deep reverence of the electorate towards the Maratha royals.

They have also been propped up with an eye to cashing on the Maratha agitation, which was strongly backed by both Mr. Bhosale and Mr. Shahu Chhatrapati, and both are respected by quota activist Manoj Jarange-Patil.

Hatkanangale, the other Lok Sabha seat in Kolhapur, sees MP Dhairyashee Mane of the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena take on Satyajeet Patil of the Sena (UBT).

However, the real contest here is between Mr. Mane and Swabhimani Shetkari Sanghatana chief Raju Shetti, the 'third force' in the fray and a former two-term MP.

Contesting independently, Mr. Shetti is attempting to reclaim lost ground by taking on the rich sugar barons by focusing on farmers' woes, poor agricultural produce, and water issues.

In the doddering Congress bastion of Solapur, the MVA's Praniti Shinde, daughter of veteran Congressman Sushilkumar Shinde, faces the BJP's Ram Satpute. This time, Ms. Shinde, bolstered by Sena (UBT), is said to be in a strong position.

Yet, despite Prime Minister Narendra Modi's frequent visits to western Maharashtra, harping on the scrapping of Article 370 and raising the bogey of the Congress awarding OBC reservation to Muslims, this region will see a settling of scores on May 7 as many have not taken kindly to the splits engineered by the saffron party within the Shiv Sena and the NCP.

Past performance

The table lists the 2019 election winners, runners-up, and their vote shares in the 11 constituencies going to the polls in the third phase of the Lok Sabha election in Maharashtra

Constituency	Party (winner)	Vote share (%)	Party (runner-up)	Vote share (%)
Baramati	NCP	52.63	BJP	40.69
Hatkanangle	SHS	46.78	SWP	39.11
Kolhapur	SHS	56.29	NCP	35.96
Latur	BJP	56.22	INC	31.65
Madha	BJP	48.2	NCP	41.5
Osmanabad	SHS	49.52	NCP	38.94
Raigad	NCP	47.49	SHS	44.42
Ratnagiri - Sindhudurg	SHS	50.83	MSHP	31.04
Sangli	BJP	42.77	SWP	28.96
Satara	NCP	51.91	SHS	40.57
Solapur	BJP	48.41	INC	33.78

Campaign mode: Maharashtra Deputy Chief Ministers Ajit Pawar and Devendra Fadnavis during a public meeting for the Lok Sabha elections, in Pune. ANI

Delimitation, indigenous identity, and minority votes may influence Assam's last phase of voting

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

The BJP's regional allies have more at stake in the third and final phase of the Lok Sabha election in Assam with the focus on reclaiming the 'parliamentary space' for representatives of indigenous or majority communities, believed to have been made easier by the 2023 delimitation.

Covering four constituencies – Barpeta, Dhubri, Guwahati, and Kokrajhar – in central and western Assam, this phase will also see the Congress pitted against more than one of its 15 partners in the United Opposition Forum, Assam (UOFA) apart from rivals in the BJP-led NDA.

The phase is headlined by Dhubri, which Maulana Badruddin Ajmal, the chief of the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) seeks to retain for the fourth straight time.

Bengali-origin Muslims constitute more than 70% of the voters in the constituency bordering Bangladesh, often used as a metaphor by indigenous groups to highlight the touchy issue of "illegal immigration" in Assam.

Mr. Ajmal, whose family is known for a global perfume business, penetrated this erstwhile Congress bastion in 2009, four years after forming the AIUDF as a challenge to the UPA government for failing to prevent the Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunal) Act from being scrapped. The Act was seen as a shield against the harassment of Muslims in the name of the detection and deportation of foreigners.

For Mr. Ajmal, 2024 is likely to be his toughest test as he faces former Assam Minister and MLA Rakibul Hussain of the Congress and Zabed Islam of the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), one of the two allies of the BJP. The other is the United People's Party Liberal (UPPL). While Mr. Hussain is confident of unfurling the Congress flag again in Dhubri after 15 years, the AGP is banking on the possible division of votes between the AIUDF and the Congress to win the seat for the first time.

The AGP, though, is surer of the Barpeta seat that underwent a demographic shift after the 2023 delimitation. Muslim-dominated Assembly segments were hived off from Barpeta and added to Dhubri while Hindu-dominated segments were added from adjoining parliamentary constituencies. "We fulfilled the promise of giving the AGP a winnable seat," Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said a few days ago.

The AGP has had a parliamentary drought since Joseph Toppo won the Sonitpur (now Tezpur) seat in 2009. The chances of the party's Barpeta candidate and former Minister Phani Bhushan Choudhury to fill the void are said to be high because of a likely split in the anti-NDA votes among three UOFA candidates – Deep Bayan of Congress, Manoranjan Talukdar of CPI(M), and Abul Kalam Azad of Trinamool Congress.

The UOFA has a similar problem in the Kokrajhar seat reserved for the Scheduled Tribes. Here, Congress candidate Garjan Mashahary faces Gauri Sankar Sarania of the Trinamool apart from Joyanta Basumatary of the UPPL, Kampa Borgoyari of the BPF, and Binita Deka of the Gana Suraksha Party.

Kokrajhar is the nerve centre of the Bodoland Territorial Region where the Bodos – the largest plains tribe in the northeast – constitute about 35% of the population. The area has been witness to conflicts between the Bodos and at least 19 non-Bodo communities, who largely helped incumbent GSP's Naba Kumar Sarania win the seat in 2014 and 2019.

Mr. Sarania's candidature was rejected this time after the Gauhati High Court found his ST certificate to be invalid.

The absence of Mr. Sarania is expected to improve the chances of a Bodo candidate being elected from the Kokrajhar seat after 10 years. Mr. Basumatary, an MLA, believes the supporters of the UPPL and the BJP will help him get a Lok Sabha berth.

The BPF, on the other hand, is banking on the "misrule" and "anti-minority face" of the UPPL to spring a surprise.

Guwahati has the fewest candidates – eight – among the third-phase seats. The constituency is set to witness a straight fight between Bijuli Kalita Medhi of the BJP and Mira Borthakur Goswami of the Congress, thus ensuring a woman represents it for the fourth straight term.

Home stretch: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma at a rally for BJP's candidate for Guwahati, Bijuli Kalita Medhi. ANI

After demand, EC defers poll in Anantnag to May 25

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

The Election Commission (EC) on Tuesday heeded the demand of a group of parties, including the BJP, the J&K Peoples Conference, and the J&K Apni Party, to defer the election in the Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha constituency to May 25. The election was scheduled to be held on May 7.

"The EC after considering report from the UT administration as well as analysing the ground situation prevailing in the constituency, has decided under Section 56 of Representation of People Act, 1951, to revise the date of poll in the said Parliamentary Constituency," Sanjeev Kumar Prasad, Secretary of the EC, said.

However, the National Conference, the Peoples Democratic Party and the CPI(M) opposed the move. These parties said the demand was being made by the BJP and the JKPC, which has not fielded any candidates from the constituency.

INBRIEF

Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi takes charge as Navy chief

Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi assumed command of the Indian Navy as the 26th Chief of the Naval Staff. He succeeds Admiral R. Hari Kumar who retires upon superannuation after over 40 years of service. "The existing and emerging challenges in the maritime domain mandate the Indian Navy to remain operationally ready to deter potential adversities at sea in peace and to 'win the war at sea' when asked to do so," Admiral Tripathi said speaking to the media after inspecting a guard of honour on South Block lawns. "That will remain my singular focus and endeavour."

10 Naxalites killed in gunfight with forces in Chhattisgarh

Ten alleged Naxalites, including three women Maoist cadres, were killed in an anti-Naxal operation in Abujmad area in Chhattisgarh's Bastar on Tuesday. Police said the gunbattle began in the early hours on the inter-district border of Kanker and Narayanpur districts when a joint team of District Reserve Guards (DRG) and Special Task Force (STF) was out for operation. The police party and the Maoists exchanged fire in the forest between Tekmeta and Kakur villages. Arms and ammunition, including an AK47 and explosives, were also recovered.

PM's speeches show he is frustrated, says Kharge

Shubhomoy Sikdar
RAIPUR

Criticising Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent remarks on an array of topics – from wealth tax to the consumption of non-vegetarian food during Hindu festivals – Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Tuesday said that Mr. Modi was speaking out of "frustration".

"Everybody is saying the Congress will get a big majority in the first two phases, so Modi *sahab* is writhing, the land beneath his [Mr. Modi's] feet is shaking, and out of frustration he is abusing us, speaking on *mangalsutra*, Mughals, Muslims, to even mutton and chicken," Mr. Kharge said in his public speech at Janjgir-Champa in Chhattisgarh on Tuesday. The references cited by the Congress president pertained to the content of Mr. Modi's campaign speeches.

Countering the claims, the 81-year-old leader said that Muslims were Indians, and appealed to the gathering to not be misled by the BJP and, instead, build the country together.

BJP eliminates terrorists on their home turf, says Modi

PM contrasts UPA government's diplomatic dossiers post the 2008 Mumbai terror attack with the BJP-led NDA's 'surgical strikes'; slams Congress for alleged plan to impose inheritance tax

Shoumojit Banerjee
PUNE

For the second time in two days, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said that his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led Union government eliminated terrorists by entering their home turf, in stark contrast to the previous Congress-led UPA regime, which, he said, had merely compiled and sent dossiers on the terror attacks to neighbouring Pakistan.

Addressing a poll rally in Latur district in the Marathwada region, Mr. Modi mocked the alleged ineffectiveness of previous Congress-led governments. "During the Congress regime, news headlines used to be about India handing over another dossier to Pakistan about terror activities and terrorists. It used to be big news. Some of our friends in the media used to clap after any such dossier was sent," he remarked, commenting on the situation post the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks.

Narendra Modi being felicitated by Eknath Shinde and Devendra Fadnavis at Latur in Maharashtra on Tuesday. ANI

Claiming that it was his government that had made the country safe and secure, the PM said: "Today, India does not dispatch dossiers, but we eliminate terrorists on their home turf. The headlines in the 'New Bharat' read: 'Mission LOC, India punishes Pakistan through surgical strikes.'"

Mr. Modi was campaigning for NDA candidates for the Latur, Dharashiv (formerly Osmanabad), and Madha (in Solapur) Lok Sabha seats, which go to the polls on May 7 in the third phase.

The PM resurrected the bogey of the Opposition Congress' alleged plan to introduce an inheritance tax if it comes to power. "By this tax, if one is leaving behind 10 acres of land after their death, then their legal heirs will get only five acres each, and the remaining will go to the Congress. This party has given power and privilege to its own first family [alluding to the Nehru-Gandhi family] and its new generation through inheritance," he said.

Addressing a public rally at Malshiras in Madha, the PM launched a broadside against Nationalist Congress Party (SP) president Sharad Pawar, saying that the time had come "to punish him" for not keeping his promise made in 2009 to bring water to Solapur district, which faces acute scarcity. Mr. Pawar had contested and won the Madha seat in 2009.

"A tall leader from Maharashtra, whom you all know, had pledged to bring water to Solapur back in 2009. Was he able to give you the water? It is time to teach him a lesson. His tenure as MP was so abysmal that he did not dare to contest from the Madha constituency after that. There were 99 incomplete irrigation projects in the country, 26 from Maharashtra. It is my mission to deliver on my promise of giving water to every field and household. We have completed 63 of these projects," Mr. Modi said.

'Modi-Shah bent on doing away with Constitution'

Mehul Malpani
MORENA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made up his mind that if the BJP wins the Lok Sabha election, they will "tear up and throw away" the Constitution, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said in Madhya Pradesh on Tuesday.

"The Prime Minister, [Union Home Minister] Amit Shah and various MPs of theirs have made up their mind that if they win the elections, they will tear up and throw away this book," Mr. Gandhi said, holding a copy of the Constitution while addressing an election rally in Bhind Lok Sabha seat in Gwalior-Chambal region.

"This is the fight. Whatever growth has happened in the nation, whatever the poor have gotten whether its under MGNREGA, Land Acquisition Bill, white revolution, will all vanish. The BJP wants this book to be thrown away and the nation to be run by 20-25 billionaires," he said, adding that all of people's rights such as reservation are due to the Constitution.

SC asks if grounds for arrest were provided to *NewsClick* founder

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday told Delhi Police that judicial orders remanding 74-year-old journalist and online portal *NewsClick* founder Prabir Purkayastha will crumble if his arrest turns out to be illegal.

A Bench of Justices B.R. Gavai and Sandeep Mehta quizzed the police on their operation to pick up Mr. Purkayastha in the early hours of October 3 last year. He was rushed to the Magistrate, who passed an order at 6 a.m. remanding him to custody.

Mr. Purkayastha, who was charged under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, was represented by a legal aid lawyer. His own lawyer was not informed. The police had sent by WhatsApp the details of the arrest and remand to Mr. Purkayastha's lawyer after the order for his custody was passed.

If arrest is found illegal, subsequent orders turn invalid, says top court

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, for Mr. Purkayastha, said, "When we asked why we were not informed, the police said it was 6 a.m. The FIR was not given to us. We applied. The police objected. The grounds of arrest were not communicated."

Justice Mehta asked Additional Solicitor General S.V. Raju, "Was he given the grounds of arrest? Unless you give him the grounds, how can he defend himself or apply for bail?" Mr. Raju said Mr. Purkayastha was "orally informed" about the grounds for his arrest. "But now, giving them in writing is necessary... Look, if your arrest was illegal, the subsequent orders will also be illegal," the judge cautioned the police.

AstraZeneca submission over COVID vaccine nothing new, say doctors

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

Following pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca's admission in U.K. court documents that its vaccine against COVID-19 has the potential to cause Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome (TTS), a rare side effect associated with blood clotting, doctors in India said this is not new information and that they are "well aware of the warning which has been available in India as an insert with the vaccine since the time it was introduced for general public here".

They added that any adverse event associated with the vaccine would have occurred within 21 days to a month of the first dose.

A report in British newspaper *The Daily Telegraph* stated that in a legal document submitted to the High Court in London in February for a group action being brought by 51 claimants, AstraZeneca admitted that the vaccine developed with the University of Oxford to protect against COVID-19 may cause TTS in "very rare cases".

Doctors say any adverse event would have occurred within a month of the first dose.

"It is admitted that the AZ vaccine can, in very rare cases, cause TTS. The causal mechanism is not known. Further, TTS can also occur in the absence of the AZ vaccine (or any vaccine). Causation in any individual case will be a matter for expert evidence," the newspaper quoted the legal document.

The consequences of TTS are potentially life-threatening including strokes, brain damage, and heart attacks.

Both the Union Health Ministry and COVID-19 vaccine Covishield's manufacturer Serum Institute of India on Tuesday issued no statement regarding the development. The Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine is sold under the brand name Covishield in India.

Product information

In India, the product information with the vaccine clearly mentions TTS in its special warnings and special precautions for use section while adding that a "majority of the events occurred within the first 21 days following vaccination and some events had a fatal outcome".

Doctors here said that the court admission now is "no secret".

Rajeev Jayadevan, co-chairman of the National Indian Medical Association (IMA) COVID Task Force, said: "The court admission is nothing new. In fact, these are well documented facts validated since early 2021 (soon after vaccine rollout). The World Health Organisation (WHO) wrote about it in May 2021 and updated it in 2023."

He added that clotting was an issue for persons who were administered the first dose of the vaccine and in the first month afterwards.

"Therefore, in 2024, people are not at risk of TTS. Also, heart attacks and strokes we see in practice are not caused by TTS, which is an exceptionally rare immunological reaction that leads to clots in certain locations," he added.

"The clotting side effect of this vaccine is already known and is extremely rare. This is not the first time AstraZeneca admits risk of clotting events (again rarest side effect) associated with COVID," Cyriac Abby Philips, hepatologist from Kerala, wrote in a social media post.

(With PTI inputs)

A.P. crash: Railways had no voice recording facility at train stations

S. Vijay Kumar
CHENNAI

Commissioner of Railway Safety said the loco pilot of one train was reluctant to cross the signal

A piece of crucial evidence to ascertain the reasons that led to the devastating collision between two passenger trains, which left 17 people dead near Vizianagaram in Andhra Pradesh last year, has been lost since a safety advisory to install voice recording facility at railway stations was ignored, official sources said on Tuesday.

The accident pertains to the rear-end collision of Visakhapatnam-Rayagada Passenger with Visakhapatnam-Palasa Passenger between Kantakapalle and Alamanda railway stations in Waltair Division of East Coast Railway on October 29, 2023.

In the statutory investigation, Commissioner of Railway Safety Pranjeev Saxena has said that the loco pilot of the Visakhapatnam-Rayagada train was reluctant to cross the signal in danger. The Station Superintendent of Kantakapalle railway station issued a Private Number (a secret code) authorising him to cross the signal in red. "The role of the Train Manager [Guard] is suspect as he is the only surviving crew member who could have acted in time to prevent the mishap... TMR has sufficient reasons not to disclose full facts as they may implicate him and the Station Superintendent of Kantakapalle," he said.

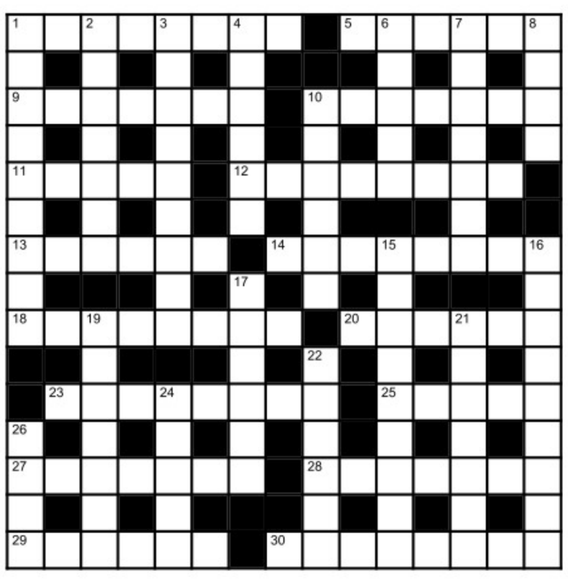
While the TMR train journal was reported "lost" and Superintendent had overwritten in the Private Number book, the "absence of audio recording of conversation on walkie-talkie makes this inconclusive", he said in the report given to the Railway Board.

TH CROSSWORD + 14163

(set by Gussalufz)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Entered "N/A" (her office rejected revealing court action) (8)
5 Form cults bristling to seize power (6)
9 Indian state's push for growth (7)
10 Reversing scene? Staple part of a bowler's arsenal (7)
11 Propose firing head of firm (5)
12 Fabric worn by Spain's male court judges (8)
13 Killing every now and then was the way she relaxed (2,4)
14 Unfairly characterise Jedi's mugshot? (8)
18 What one often gets from a sleuth sneakily capturing a bit of unfaithfulness (3,5)
20 Dismisses puzzles (6)
23 Plonks back with laziness, without a thought (8)
25 Provoke pain in Tokyo regularly (5)
27 Work's... well, evil? (7)
28 One awfully into animals and birds (7)
29 Fake tears, grandiosely high security level (6)
30 Rain, wind at terminals coming in turbulently, signal flight closures (8)

Down

1 Random illness caught aunt badly (9)
2 Gentleman: "In hindsight, I almost sounded ridiculous" (7)
3 Controls a variety of shares, including half of sensex, after recession (9)
4 Born in turmoil, led conflict (6)
6 Review of these pacts shows some outstanding features (5)
7 See what people are saying about bill on IPL's restructuring (3-4)
8 Bomb smelled bad (burning sulphur) (4)
10 Game in which "fault" and "net" are reviewed (6)
15 Experiencing post-flight problems is not regular around east terminal — disheartened! (3-6)
16 Scholars in universities say IST superior (9)
17 Wade softly and turn (6)
19 Scamper around and start to sweat after old lover blackmails (7)
21 Rainy season is imminent, as explained in Jamaica (7)
22 Setter's irrational about love, per complaint (6)
24 Goal: beer, nothing canned (5)
26 Male, possibly out of his league (4)

SUDOKU

		3			7			
	5		8				4	9
9						2	8	
			6	3	9	1		5
5		6	1	7	4			
	4	5						2
2	7				6		9	
			4			5		

No.SS6145 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle

N	U	M	B	E	R		H	A	N	D	I	C	A	P
O		E		N			P		O		H		A	
S	L	A	Y	E	R		S	P	A	R	T	A	N	S
H		S		R			E		S		T		T	
	H	U	N	G	P	A	R	L	I	A	M	E	N	T
		R		I		I		L		L		A		E
O	V	E	R	S	P	R	E	A	D		Q	U	I	N
F				E		L		T		S				S
F	I	J	I		F	A	M	I	L	Y	T	R	E	E
B		O		A		Y		V		M		E		
R	E	G	I	S	T	E	R	E	D	P	O	S	T	
E		T		K		R				H		P		S
A	I	R	T	A	X	I	S		Z	O	D	I	A	C
K		O		R		N				N		R		A
S	E	T	T	I	N	G	S		W	Y	V	E	R	N

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

3	7	1	5	6	4	9	8	2
2	8	9	3	7	1	5	6	4
6	4	5	2	9	8	3	7	1
4	1	6	8	5	9	2	3	7
5	2	7	6	4	3	1	9	8
9	3	8	1	2	7	4	5	6
1	9	2	7	8	5	6	4	3
7	5	3	4	1	6	8	2	9
8	6	4	9	3	2	7	1	5

FAITH

Beginning with pranava

In the first verse of Kandar Anubhuti, Arunagirinatha begins with the word '*aadum*'. Thus the work may be said to begin with the pranava mantra – AUM, said So. So. Meenakshisundaram in a discourse. The word '*aadum*' contains 'a', 'u' and 'm'. *Aadum pari* are the first two words in the verse. *Pari* means horse but here, it is a reference to the peacock. The saint could have used the more commonly used word '*mayil*' for peacock. But then, the pranava would be lost and his intention was to place the pranava right at the beginning.

If he had used the word *mayil*, then along with the adjective '*aadum*' (dancing), it would have been read as '*aadumayil*'. Thus the separate word *aadum*, with its emphasis on all the three letters, namely, 'a', 'u', and 'm', would no longer be there in the verse. Hence the use of the word *pari*, instead of *mayil*.

He talks next about Muruga's *vel* (spear). In Thiruppugazh, Arunagirinatha praises the spear as '*manthira vel*', the spear as the embodiment of mantras.

Arunagirinatha then refers to '*azhagiya seval*', the lovely rooster. *Seval* can be taken to mean protection. By beginning with Muruga's peacock mount, his spear, and the rooster on His flag, Arunagirinatha indicates to us that Kandar Anubhuti describes Muruga's appearance.

INBRIEF

Central Bank of India Q4 PAT jumps 41.33% to ₹807 crore

Central Bank of India (CBI) reported fourth quarter net profit grew 41.33% to ₹807 crore from the year-earlier period. Total income improved by 13.2% to ₹9,699 crore. Net interest income (NII) improved marginally to ₹3,541 crore, up 0.80%, the lender said in a filing. For FY24, the bank's reported net profit grew 61.13 % to ₹2,549 crore from the previous year. NII grew by 10.34% on a YoY basis to ₹12,896 crore. Total income improved to ₹35,434 crore.

Chola Investment Finance Q4 net rises 24% to ₹1,058 cr.

Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Co. Ltd. (CIFCL) reported standalone net profit for the March quarter rose 24% YoY to ₹1,058 crore. Net income grew 41% to ₹2,913 crore. Revenue from operations increased to ₹4,934 crore from ₹3,499 crore, the financial arm of the Murugappa Group said in a statement. Total assets under management increased by 36% to ₹1,53,718 crore and CIFCL clocked disbursements of ₹24,784 crore, a growth of 18%.

Star Health Insurance Q4 net profit rises 40% to ₹142 crore

Star Health and Allied Insurance Co. Ltd.'s (Star Health Insurance) standalone net profit for the quarter ended March 31, rose 40% YoY to ₹142 crore. Gross written premium rose 18% to ₹4,968 crore due to strong demand in retail health insurance. Underwriting profits grew robustly on the back of strong underwriting and risk management, the health insurer said in a statement. Combined ratio was 96.7% against 92.7%, while claim ratio rose to 66.5% from 65%.

Core sectors slid 5.2% in March

The Index of Core Industries rose at a three-year low pace of 7.5% through 2023-24, but hit a multi-year high in March; for the first time in 12 years all 8 sectors recorded annual growth, led by double-digit upticks in steel and coal

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

India's eight core infrastructure sectors' output growth moderated to 5.2% in March from an upgraded 7.1% uptick in February, with high growth in Cement and Electricity production offset by contractions in fertilisers and refinery products.

For the full year 2023-24, the core sectors recorded a three-year low growth of 7.5%, compared with 7.8% in 2022-23.

However, this also marked the first time in at least 12 years that all eight sectors had recorded annual growth, led by double-digit upticks in steel and coal, even as crude oil output rose 0.6% after 11 years of contraction.

Notably, with a reading of 173.3 in March, the Index of Core Industries (ICI) was 9.9% over February levels, and marked the highest print in at least seven and a half years. The ICI constitutes a little over 40% of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).

While all sectors recorded higher production levels compared with February, just six of the eight sectors recorded year-on-year growth as well. Fertilisers contracted 1.3% from last March, marking the third successive month of a drop in output, while refinery products shrank 0.3%.

Steel output grew 5.5%, the slowest pace since July 2022, while natural gas and crude oil production rose 6.3% and 2%, respectively. Cement production and electricity generation rose at a five-month high pace of 10.6% and 8%, respectively.

Coal output rose 8.7%, marking the slowest growth since last June. However, coal production levels were 20.7% higher than February.

Economists expect overall industrial output growth to also cool off from the 5.7% uptick recorded in February. The Index of Industrial Production for March will be released on May 10.

"Similar to the trend displayed by the core sector, IIP growth is likely to moderate somewhat in March 2024, as the leap year effect fades. We project the IIP growth at 3.5-5% in March 2024," said Aditi Nayar, chief economist at rating agency ICRA.

In 2023-24, steel output grew 12.3%, followed by an 11.7% uptick in coal and a 9.1% rise in cement production. Electricity generation recorded a 7% rise, the slowest in three years, while natural gas output grew 6.1%.

Fertilisers and refinery products grew 3.7% and 3.4%, respectively.

Slippery slope

Growth moderated to 5.2% in March from an upgraded 7.1% uptick in February

- Fertilisers contracted 1.3% from last March; refinery products shrank 0.3%
- Steel output grew 5.5%; natural gas and crude oil production rose 6.3% and 2%, respectively

- Cement, electricity rose at a 5-month high pace of 10.6% and 8%, respectively; Coal output rose 8.7%

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	TUESDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	74,483	-0.25
US Dollar	83.43	0.02
Gold	72,600	-0.20
Brent oil	87.84	-0.84

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	3054.70	-26.50
Adani Ports	1324.90	7.65
Apollo Hosp	5947.10	-21.25
Asian Paints	2875.90	7.70
Axis Bank	1165.90	6.65
Bajaj Auto	8903.65	143.55
Bajaj Finserv	1615.00	19.35
Bajaj Finance	6923.55	96.95
Bharti Airtel	1322.30	-10.15
BPCL	607.35	-11.45
Britannia Ind	4775.95	-23.90
Cipla	1400.00	-8.00
Coal India	454.30	1.05
Divis Lab	4002.40	13.15
Dr Reddys Lab	6204.30	-92.80
Eicher Motors	4597.40	25.55
Grasim Ind	2411.65	25.05
HCL Tech	1366.60	-20.80
HDFC Bank	1520.10	-9.40
HDFC Life	583.65	8.55
Hero MotoCorp	4543.05	85.35
Hindalco	644.40	-5.65
Hind Unilever	2230.45	4.35
ICICI Bank	1150.40	-9.75
IndusInd Bank	1515.70	28.45
Infosys	1420.55	-14.20
ITC	435.65	-2.55
JSW Steel	882.20	-13.55
Kotak Bank	1623.95	-16.45
L&T	3594.30	-40.00
LTIMindtree Ltd.	4706.40	-37.55
M&M	2156.35	94.30
Maruti Suzuki	12817.50	127.65
NestleIndia	2507.40	-2.40
NTPC	363.20	0.20
ONGC	282.85	-0.35
PowerGrid Corp	301.85	8.15
Reliance Ind	2934.00	3.95
SBI Life	1436.55	14.20
State Bank	826.25	-0.25
Shriram Finance Ltd.	2551.70	59.50
Sun Pharma	1502.10	-19.50
TataConsumerProduct	1108.35	9.85
Tata Motors	1007.90	7.30
Tata Steel	165.00	-2.40
TCS	3820.65	-49.55
Tech Mahindra	1263.50	-24.80
Titan	3589.25	-15.60
UltraTech Cement	9971.85	7.40
Wipro	462.40	-0.55

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on April 30

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	83.23	83.55
Euro	89.31	89.65
British Pound	104.44	104.85
Japanese Yen (100)	53.04	53.25
Chinese Yuan	11.50	11.54
Swiss Franc	91.33	91.69
Singapore Dollar	61.16	61.40
Canadian Dollar	60.82	61.05
Malaysian Ringitt	17.43	17.52
Australian Dollar	54.39	54.60

Source:Indian Bank

Tiruppur garment exports show 'revival'

M. Soundariya Preetha
COIMBATORE

Garment exports from Tiruppur registered growth in February and March after facing a slump in demand for more than a year.

As per the data with the Tiruppur Exporters' Association (TEA), Tiruppur knitwear exports rose 6.4% y-o-y in February and 5.6% in March in dollar terms.

India's total garment exports grew 4.8% in February and 1.7% in March.

K.M. Subramanian, President, TEA, said with India likely to sign a trade pact with the U.K., Indian garments will be competitive and hence, large retailers, looking for suppliers, are booking factories in India. Tiruppur may see almost 10% export growth.

Kumar Duraisamy, Joint Secretary, TEA, small retailers in Europe exhausted inventory and are buying now. Also, almost 20% of MSME exporters in Tiruppur shut shop on order delicne last year. Hence, the existing units are running to full capacity and planning capacity additions. There is 20% labour shortage in Tiruppur.

IOC shares decline more than 4% as Q4 net halves

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Shares of Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) on Tuesday declined more than 4% after the company reported a halving of its March quarter net profit.

Profit was lower as refining margins dipped, the petrochemical segment turned negative, and the firm, last month, cut petrol and diesel prices by ₹2 per litre each despite crude oil prices edging up.

IOC was also not compensated for ₹1,017 crore loss it incurred on holding

domestic cooking gas prices by the government, according to the filing.

Stocks dropped 4.44% to settle at ₹168.95 apiece on the BSE. During the day, it tanked 4.97% to ₹168.

On the NSE, it declined 4.46% to close at ₹168.85.

In volume terms, 48.93 lakh shares of IOC were traded on the BSE and 675.30 lakh shares exchanged hands on the NSE during the day.

Net profit was ₹4,837.69 crore in Q4 compared with ₹10,058.69 crore a year back and ₹8,063.39 crore in Q3, according to a stock exchange filing by the company.

However, in the full FY2024, India's top oil firm posted its highest-ever net profit of ₹39,618.84 crore, larger than ₹24,184.10 crore it had recorded in FY2022.

MM Forgings forays into EV space, plans ₹500 cr. investment

N. Anand
CHENNAI

Castings and forgings major MM Forgings Ltd., (MMF) plans to invest ₹500 crore, of which ₹100 crore will be in the Electric Vehicle (EV) space over the next 18 months, and will be funded by internal accruals and debt, said MD Vidyashankar Krishnan during an interaction.

Vidyashankar Krishnan

MMF recently forayed into the EV space with the acquisition of start-up firm Abhinava Rizel Pvt. Ltd., to produce EV powertrain components for two-and three-wheelers and commercial vehicles.

"EV powertrain segment will emerge stronger in 10 years. We are aiming ₹1,000-2,000 crore revenue from the EV business alone in 7-10 years. We will achieve this by diversifying and refocusing on green energy and changing our product mix," he said.

MMF also announced N. Srinivasan had stepped down as Chairman on March 31.

He has been succeeded by Mr. Krishnan.

KMB Joint MD K.V.S. Manian steps down

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Kotak Mahindra Bank (KMB) informed the exchanges that K.V.S. Manian, its whole time director designated as Joint Managing Director had stepped down with immediate effect.

He had joined Kotak in 1995 and in his 29-year-long association, led various businesses across the group. KMB recently announced a new reporting structure.

The Wholesale, Commercial and Private Banking division will report directly to Ashok Vaswani, MD & CEO, while the Asset Reconstruction Division will report to Shanti Ekambaram, Deputy MD, who will also oversee the Investment Banking and Institutional Equities businesses.

SEBI board approves changes to mutual fund regulations

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is making it mandatory for Asset Management Companies (AMCs) to have an institutional mechanism for deterrence of potential market abuse, including front-running.

Considering the recent front-running instances observed by the market regulator, the SEBI Board on Tuesday approved amendments to SEBI (Mutual Funds) Regulations, 1996 to enhance the existing regulatory framework by requiring AMCs to put in place a structured institutional mechanism for identification and deterrence of potential market abuse including front-running and fraudulent transactions in securities.

'Enhanced surveillance'

"The mechanism shall consist of enhanced surveillance systems, internal control procedures and escalation processes to identify, monitor and address specific types of misconduct including front running, insider trading and misuse of sensitive information," SEBI announced.

Front-running is trading in stock, or any other financial asset by a broker who has inside knowledge of a future transaction that is about to affect its price substantially.

The Board also approved enhancing responsibility and accountability of AMCs for such an institutional mechanism and foster transparency by requiring AMCs to have a whistle blower mechanism.

SEBI approves SES ESG Research as ESG Ratings Provider

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

SES ESG Research Private Ltd. (SES ESG), a wholly owned subsidiary of Stakeholders Empowerment Services (SES), said it had received the 'Certificate of Registration as an ESG (environment, social and governance) Ratings Provider' (ERP) from market regulator SEBI.

SES began ESG ratings in 2018-19. Its coverage has now increased to more than 500 companies. This could rise further based on client needs, the firm said.

'Manufacturing witnessing an uptick in fresher hiring'

Mini Tejaswi
BENGALURU

Fresher hiring in the manufacturing sector is seeing an uptick currently, in the first half of calendar 2024, and the trend coincides with an increase in capital investments, mergers and acquisitions activities in automobile, electronics and textiles and an increased focus on manufacturing, according to third-party hiring firms.

They typically get into the roles of design and engineering, automation, embedded and mechanical engineering, assembly line, production planning and control and supply-chain management. Firms hiring freshers include Siemens, GE, Philips, ABB and Bosch, according to industry observers.

TeamLease EdTech, a learning and employability solution services firm, forecasts 7% surge in hiring in the first half of the calendar based on a survey.

"This reflects growing confidence in industry's growth," said Shantanu Rooj, Founder-CEO.

Aditya Narayan Mishra, MD & CEO, CIEL HR, said the rise in the number of middle-class households and related socio-economic changes were raising demand for consumer goods.

Hiring prospects would only improve as sectors like aviation, defence, semiconductors, EVs and mobile phone manufacturing experience rapid growth, said Puneet Arora, Managing Partner, Biz Staffing Comrade.

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Preference would be given to applicants with multicultural outlook, deep passion for academic and research rigour, excellent communication skills, ability to get projects/ programmes conceptualized, implemented through team work and monitored at administrative and financial levels.

Candidates with Ph.D/Masters in Economics/Development Economics with multiyear work experience in multilateral or international institutions would be preferred.

Details may be viewed at: https://www.ris.org.in/opening.
Last date: 13 May 2024

MALABAR CEMENTS LIMITED
(A Government of Kerala Undertaking)
An ISO 9001:2015, 14001:2015 Company, Walayar Post, Palakkad - 678624 - Kerala
Email : materials@malabarcements.com/bulkmcl@malabarcements.com

TENDER NOTICE

Visit www.etenders.kerala.gov.in for Online Submission of Bids for Tender:
❖ Supply of 60000 MT Clinker on CFR Cochin Port Basis ❖ Providing AMC for SAP Functional / Technical modules / SAP portal/ DR ❖ Service Contract for drilling of 4.5 inch dia blasting holes at MCL Mines ❖ Miscellaneous Civil Works at Plant (2024) ❖ Miscellaneous Structural Works at Plant (2024) ❖ Supply of Box Head for Bucket Carriage 2 ❖ Supply of Conveyor Belt Nylon 600 MM HR ❖ Disposal of Obsolete and Non-Operational Equipments/ Items from Mines ❖ Disposal of Copper, High Carbon Steel & Rubber scrap items. (Pls vist : www.mstcecommerce.com).

Sd/- MANAGING DIRECTOR

BHARAT DYNAMICS LIMITED
(A Government of India Enterprise)
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
GACHIBOWLI, HYDERABAD-500 032.

Ref: BDL/CC/2024-25/EOI-02 Date:- 01.05.2024

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

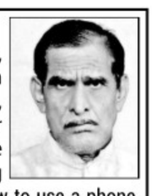
EOI is hereby invited by BDL from INDIAN firms/Organizations, willing to Undertake development, manufacture & supply of below items

Sl.NO	Tender ID	Description
01	65753	Expression of Interest for supply of Aluminum alloy & steel materials

Please visit website **https://bdltenders.abcprocure.com** for further details. Bids should be submitted online only. **"Corrigendum if any shall be issued through our e-portal only and not in Newspapers"**
*Bidders are Requested to apply for online Vendor Registration in BDL Website **https://bdl.abcprocure.com/eBid/BDLVendorRegistration.jsp** or business Prospects.

Addl. General Manager (Corp Comml)

MISSING



Aasharam Meena, Age 53/24, S/o Jagananath Meena, Mui P.O, Mui Village, Sawai Madhopur, Rajasthan has been missing from his rented house at Velloore, Kottayam, Kerala. FIR has been registered in Vellor Police Station as since 14.1.2024 Vellore Police Station as Crime: 55/2024 U/S 57 KP Act. It is being investigated. He is six feet tall, he does not know how to use a phone, he is not mentally developed, he is medium white colour, his hair is dyed and black when he is missing, he has a stubble on his right hand and he has been operated on, he was wearing a light blue colour T-shirt and Bermuda shorts when he disappeared, if you have any information about him, please contact the following phone numbers.

DySP Vaikom : 9497990262
SHO Velloor PS : 9497947291
SI Velloor PS : 9497980345
Velloor Police Station : 04829 257160

176/F2/2024/I&PRD

NEW YORK

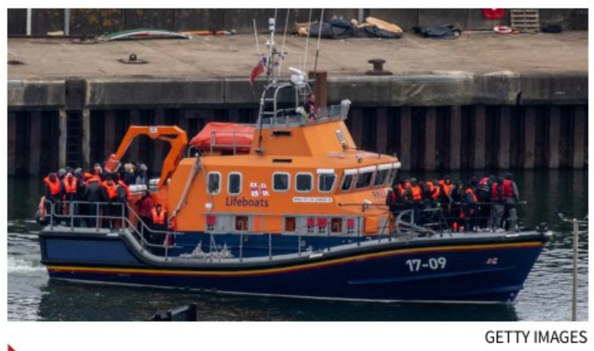
Judge fines Trump $9,000 for contempt in hush money trial

REUTERS

The judge overseeing Donald Trump's criminal hush money trial fined the former U.S. president $9,000 for contempt of court on Tuesday and said he would consider jailing him if he continued to violate a gag order. The judge had imposed the gag order to prevent Mr. Trump from criticising witnesses involved in the case. REUTERS

LONDON

U.K. to deport 5,700 migrants to Rwanda, stirring controversy



GETTY IMAGES

The United Kingdom expects to deport 5,700 migrants to Rwanda this year, a senior minister said on Tuesday, after the government published new details on the controversial plan. Rwanda has "in principle" agreed to accept 5,700 migrants already in the U.K., the Interior Ministry revealed late on Monday. AFP

WASHINGTON

Biden administration to make marijuana use a less serious crime

AP

The U.S. Department of Justice on Tuesday moved to make marijuana use as a less serious crime, a source familiar with the matter said. If finalised, the policy change could potentially be the biggest shift in federal cannabis policy in 40 years. The shift, however, would not legalise marijuana for recreational use. REUTERS

LONDON

'I'm well', says King Charles III as he resumes his public duties

GETTY IMAGES

King Charles III on Tuesday reportedly told fellow cancer patients "I'm well", as he carried out his first official public engagement since being diagnosed with the condition. The British head of state appeared relaxed as he and his wife met patients and staff at the University College Hospital Macmillan Cancer Centre, London. AFP

Columbia locks down campus after anti-war student protests escalate

Students occupy Hamilton Hall, a building on the main campus that had been occupied in the past by protesters several times; they say the university has not made significant concessions, and refuse to leave the campus 'unless by force'

Anisha Dutta
NEW YORK

Protesters link arms outside Hamilton Hall barricading students inside the building, at Columbia University on Tuesday. REUTERS

In the wee hours of Tuesday morning, student protesters occupied a building on Columbia University's main campus, escalating tensions at the university hours after administrators began suspending students who refused to leave a 'Gaza Solidarity Encampment'.

Hamilton Hall, the building at Columbia University that protesters occupied early Tuesday morning, has been occupied several times by student activists over the past half-century. It was last occupied in 1968 amid protests against the Vietnam War. Over several dozen protesters occupied the hall moving metal gates to barricade the doors, blocking entrances with wooden tables and chairs, and zip-tying doors shut.

The building was seized after demonstrators marched around the Manhattan campus to chants of "Free Palestine." Around 1:40 a.m., protesters inside the hall unfurled a banner reading "Hind's Hall"– renaming Hamilton after Hind Rajab, a six-year-old Palestinian killed by the Israeli military in Gaza. At around 6 a.m, the university announced that it had closed the campus to everyone but students who live inside the dorms on the campus and employees who provide essential services. "This access restriction will remain in place until circumstances allow otherwise," it said in a statement. On Monday, Columbia began suspending students who refused to leave a 'Gaza Solidarity Encampment' after negotiations with protesters failed and the students decided to ignore a warning that remaining would lead to their suspension and eviction.

Columbia said the nearly two-week-long protest violated university policies, created an unwelcoming and "intolerable" environment for Jewish students and that "external actors" have contributed to a "hostile environment" around university gates.

Sueda Polat, a student organiser with the encampment, said the university had not made significant concessions to the protesters' main demand: divestment from companies with links to the Israeli occupation of Gaza. Columbia had stopped negotiating. As a result, she said, the students inside the encampment "will not be moved unless by force". *(Anisha Dutta is a New York-based freelance journalist)*

South Asia diaspora group starts mobilising for Biden

Sriram Lakshman

South Asian social and political priorities were aligned with those of the Biden-Harris platform, a speaker at the event says. AP

With just over six months left for the American general elections, some South Asian election activists are mobilising to re-elect U.S. President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris to the White House. The all-volunteer group, South Asians for Mr. Biden, kicked off its activities for the election season with a virtual event held on April 25 that featured messages from lawmakers and functionaries of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and focused on issues such as reproductive rights and gun control.

The group, like other groups working in this space, is motivated by the idea that South Asian populations in battleground States had exceeded the margins of victory for Democrats in previous election cycles (2020 and 2021 for example). This makes South Asians, like other Asian American and Pacific Islander groups (AAPI or AANHNPI to include Native Hawaiians), a potential deciding factor in who wins in battleground States.

In a close election, such as the 2020 race between Donald Trump and Mr. Biden, winning swing States could be key to winning the 270 electoral votes needed to win the White House. However, Democrats and Republicans are focused not just on the Biden *v* Trump rematch this year but also other 'down ballot' races – crucial Senate and House seats as well as contests for State offices.

South Asians for Biden had reached out to a few hundred thousand South Asian and AAPI voters directly and via its digital and video campaigns in 2020 and 2021, according to Neha Dewan, national co-director of the group. Ms. Dewan listed the group's outreach in States such as Georgia and Wisconsin where Mr. Biden won by wafer-thin margins (around 12,000 votes in Georgia for example).

Important areas

During the virtual event, titled, 'Mobilising the South Asian Community to be the Margin of Victory', Ms. Dewan highlighted the work of the Biden administration in areas she said were of importance to the community: reproductive rights (e.g., women's access to contraception and abortion), curbing gun violence and hate crimes against Asian Americans.

"I know that the calls that were made into Georgia and into Wisconsin, were beyond the winning margin," said Quentin Fulks, principal deputy campaign manager for Biden-Harris 2024.

The AAPI vote was 4% of the electorate in Georgia, and an important part of the margin (just under 3%) that got Senator Raphael Warnock re-elected the Senate (December 2022), Mr. Fulks said. Democrats retained control (51-49) of the U.S. Senate with Mr. Warnock getting elected for full term in the 118th Congress that began in 2023. "It's going to take all of us again in 2024 to make sure that we hit 270 electoral votes," Mr. Fulks said.

The majority of U.S. born and foreign-born Indian Americans lean towards the Democratic Party (as per 2020 data), a statistic the group appears to capitalise on.

One of the speakers at the virtual event, Washington (State) Democrat, Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal cited data to support the view that South Asian social and political priorities were aligned with those of the Biden-Harris platform.

Member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Ro Khanna, an Indian American California Democrat, emphasised that South Asian voters were critical to electoral victories in Pennsylvania, Michigan, Nevada, Georgia and Arizona. Mr. Biden won the electoral college votes in each of these States in 2020.

"We were key to President Biden and Vice President Harris's 2020 historic win. We need to mobilise again," he said.

Hamas, Fatah held talks in Beijing: China

Nikhil M. Babu
BEIJING

Representatives of the Palestinian National Liberation Movement (Fatah) and the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) recently came to Beijing to have an "in-depth and candid" dialogue on promoting Palestinian reconciliation, at the invitation of China, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China.

"The two sides fully expressed their political will of realising reconciliation through dialogue and consultation, had discussions on many issues, and made encouraging progress," a Foreign Ministry spokesperson said on Tuesday. He said that the two sides agreed to continue their dialogue to achieve Palestinian unity at an early date.

"They highly appreciated and thanked the China's firm support for the just cause of the Palestinian people in restoring their legitimate national rights, and reached an agreement on ideas for future dialogue," the spokesperson said. *(The correspondent is in China at the invitation of the China Public Diplomacy Association.)*

Netanyahu pledges to invade Rafah 'with or without a deal'

Associated Press
TEL AVIV

Benjamin Netanyahu

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pledged on Tuesday to launch an incursion into the southern Gaza city of Rafah, where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians are sheltering from the almost 7-month-long war, as ceasefire negotiations between Israel and Hamas appear to be gaining steam.

Mr. Netanyahu's comments came hours before U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrives in Israel to advance the truce talks – which appear to be one of the most serious rounds of negotiations between Israel and Hamas since the war began. The deal is meant to free hostages, bring some relief to the population and avert an Israeli offensive into Rafah and the potential harm to civilians there.

Mr. Netanyahu said Israel would enter Rafah to destroy Hamas's battalions there regardless of whether a truce-for-hostages deal was struck or not.

"The idea that we will stop the war before achieving all of its goals is out of the question," Mr. Netanyahu said, according to a statement. "We will enter Rafah and eliminate Hamas's battalions there – with or without a deal, to achieve the total victory."

Sport

Injury strikes Hima; Tajinderpal fails to turn up; Manu wins javelin

INDIAN GP

Ashwin Achal
BENGALURU

Nailing the gold: Manu won with an effort of 81.91m. ASHWIN ACHAL

Sprinter Hima Das failed to complete the women's 200m event in the Indian Grand Prix track and field competition at Sree Kanteerava Stadium here on Tuesday.

Hima, who returned to competition here after being provisionally suspended by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) for three whereabouts failures, grimaced in pain and pulled out near the bend. The event was won by Andhra Pradesh's Chelimi (23.92s).

The men's shot put was not held as all three competitors in the IGP bib entry list – Sourabh Vij, Siddharth Rao and Tajinderpal Singh Toor – failed to turn up to the venue, an event official said.

Tajinderpal, whose personal best stands at 21.77m, was best placed to breach the 2024 Paris Olympics qualification standard of 21.50m. No athlete was able to achieve the Paris Olympics qualification standard on Tuesday. 2023 Asian Athletics Championships silver medalist D.P. Manu won the men's javelin with a 81.91m throw. Praveen Chithravel shut out favourite Eldhose Paul in the men's triple jump with a leap of 17.12m but fell short of the Olympic mark of 17.22m. Shaili Singh (6.52m) won the women's long jump, while her rival Nayana James (6.44m) took silver.

The results (winners): Men: 100m: Animesh Kujur (Odi), 10.51s; **200m:** Animesh Kujur (Odi), 20.97s; **triple jump:** Praveen Chithravel (TN), 17.12m; **high jump:** Jesse Sandesh (Kar), 2.20m; **javelin:** D.P. Manu (Kar), 81.91m; **long jump:** Aditya Kumar (MP), 8.01m. **Women: 100m:** Nithya Gandhe (Tel), 11.78s; **200m:** Chelimi (AP), 23.92s; **800m:** Laxmipriya Kisan (Odi), 2:10.88s; **3,000m steeplechase: S**onam (Del), 10:43.65s; **triple jump:** N.V. Sheena (Ker), 13.48m; **high jump:** Abhinaya Shetty (Kar), 1.74m; **shot put:** Abha Khatua (Mah), 16.59m; **javelin:** K. Rashmi (AP), 53.77m; long jump: Shaili Singh (UP), 6.52m.

Dominant China steamrollers India

UBER CUP

Press Trust of India
CHENGDU (CHINA)

Teenager Anmol Kharb left the badminton court in tears owing to an ankle injury as an under-strength Indian women's team suffered a 0-5 defeat to China in its final Group A fixture of the Uber Cup here on Tuesday.

Having already qualified for the quarterfinals by picking up successive wins against Canada and Singapore, Ashmita Chaliha sat out the contest against the 15-time champion.

Olympic champion and World No. 2 Chen Yu Fei started off the proceedings for China with an easy 21-12, 21-10 win over 83rd ranked Isharani Baruah. National champions Priya Konjengbam and Shruti Mishra, ranked 67, were no match for reigning World champions Chen Qing Chen and Jia Yi Fan, who doubled China's lead with a 21-13, 21-12 win.

She received medical attention but the pain didn't seem to subside and the ankle looked swollen, forcing her to retire.

In the next two matches, Liu Shen Shu and Tan Ning defeated Simran Singh and Ritika Thaker 21-9, 21-10, while Tanvi Sharma lost 7-21, 16-21 to Wang Zhi Yi as China completed the 5-0 drubbing.

India will end the group stage proceedings in second place behind China.

Dortmund banks on home advantage against Mbappe's PSG

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Associated Press
DORTMUND

Dortmund is unbeaten in its last 10 games at home in the competition. REUTERS

Borussia Dortmund's injury worries have eased and coach Edin Terzic is hopeful all but two players will be fit for the Champions League semifinal first leg against Paris Saint-Germain.

Terzic said on Tuesday that left back Ramy Bensebaini and young forward Julien Duranville are definitely out of Wednesday's match, but that others can return. Dortmund already faced Kylian Mbappe's PSG in the group stage, losing 0-2 in Paris before drawing 1-1 at home and topping the group. But Terzic is aware that PSG needs to finally win Europe's premier competition to justify more than a decade of huge investment from its Qatari owners.

Match starts at 00.30 a.m. on Thursday.

CONFIDENT

PBKS will be buoyed by its performance in last game: Fleming

S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

CSK coach Stephen Fleming talked about how PBKS will be confident coming into the contest after its record chase. "I would assume that the Kings will be buoyed by their performance in the last game [chasing 262 against KKR], but they'll also be realistic as they have to adjust to the new conditions in Chennai," Fleming said.

TRICKY WICKET

It's hard to play in Chepauk as they know the conditions: Langeveldt

S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

PBKS fast bowling coach Charl Langeveldt talked about the challenges of playing CSK at its den. "It's always a tricky wicket here. Sometimes it's slow but it looks like we're playing on a fresh deck. We beat them when we played here last year. But it's hard to play in Chepauk. They know the conditions and bowl well in them."

DOUBLE TROUBLE

Harshit Rana suspended for one match, fined 100% match fee

K.R. DEEPAK

Kolkata Knight Riders seamer Harshit Rana was on Tuesday fined 100% of his match fees and suspended for one match for breaching the IPL Code of Conduct during the seven-wicket win over Delhi Capitals in Kolkata. Rana will now miss KKR's next match against Mumbai Indians away on Friday.

CAMEO

Kuldeep has second-highest score by a batter at No. 9 or below

K.R. DEEPAK

Ace India and DC spinner Kuldeep Yadav registered the second-highest score by a player batting at number nine or lower in the history of the IPL on Monday during the game against KKR. Kuldeep's 26-ball 35 n.o. is only behind Harbhajan Singh's unbeaten 49 in 18 balls for MI against Deccan Chargers in 2010.

Pant back in India colours; Chahal, Dube and Samson also get the nod

Rohit will lead the side and Hardik will be his deputy; selectors keep faith in Kohli; Rahul, Rinku miss the bus; Gill loses opener's slot to Jaiswal

T20 WORLD CUP

Ashwin Achal
BENGALURU

Yuzvendra Chahal and Shivam Dube were named in India's 15-member squad for the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024.

The team, announced by the BCCI on Tuesday, will be led by Rohit Sharma. Hardik Pandya has been named Rohit's deputy.

Leggie Chahal, ignored for India's recent T20 assignments, was picked on the strength of good returns for Rajasthan Royals in the ongoing IPL season.

Chahal is the only right-arm spinner in the squad, with southpaws Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel and Kuldeep Yadav forming the rest of the spin attack.

Jasprit Bumrah, Arshdeep Singh and Mohammed Siraj are the specialist pacers.

Lucknow Super Giants skipper K.L. Rahul and Royal Challengers Bengaluru's Dinesh Karthik were among the notable omissions. Karthik had harboured hopes of making the bus, after finding good form as a finisher for RCB.

Shubman Gill lost out on the opener slot to Yashasvi Jaiswal. Gill and lower-order batter Rinku Singh were named in the reserves. Rinku gave way to Dube, who has shown a penchant for big hits.

The tournament marks the international comeback of wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant. Pant, who last donned the India cap in December 2022, was forced into a long layoff after suffering a car accident.

The 26-year-old has proved his worth in IPL 2024, making vital contributions with the bat for Delhi Capitals (DC) and showing athleticism with the 'keeping gloves.

RR captain and fan-favourite Sanju Samson is the second gloveman.

Samson has shone bright for RR, batting at a strike-rate of 161.08 with an average of 77.

The selectors have kept their faith in Virat Kohli, who in recent times has been criticised for not keeping a high strike-rate.

Kohli had dismissed these concerns after an unbeaten 44-ball 70 for RCB against Gujarat Titans on Sunday, stating that "it is just about winning the game for the team."

Trust has also been placed on Hardik, who has struggled in his maiden season as captain of Mumbai Indians.

Hardik has failed with both bat and ball, and has faced the ire of MI fans who are unhappy with him replacing Rohit as the MI skipper.

India commences its World Cup campaign against Ireland on June 5 at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium (New York), followed by the highly-anticipated clash against Pakistan on June 9 at the same venue.

India then takes on USA and Canada on June 12 and 15 respectively.

Mission T20 World Cup

A look at the Indian players who made the cut for the mega event to be held in the USA and Caribbean from June 1

THE SQUAD

RESERVES: Shubman Gill, Rinku Singh, Khaleel Ahmed, and Avesh Khan

THE SCHEDULE

- **June 5:** vs. Ireland, New York, *7.30 p.m. IST*
- **June 9:** Pakistan, New York, *8 p.m.*
- **June 12:** USA, New York, *8 p.m.*
- **June 15:** Canada, Lauderhill, *8 p.m.*
- The semifinals will be played on June 26 at Tarouba (Trinidad & Tobago) (8.30 p.m. local time, June 27, 6 a.m. in India) and June 27 at Providence (Guyana) (10.30 a.m. local time, June 27, 8 p.m. in India)
- The final will be held on June 29 in Bridgetown (Barbados) (10 a.m. local time, 7.30 p.m. in India)

Need players with X-factor like Dube in a World Cup: Fleming

Multi-dimensional: Dube has shown that there's a lot more to him than just smashing the spinners out of sight. EMMANUAL YOGINI

Sankar Narayanan E.H.
CHENNAI

Just hours after India announced its squad for the 2024 T20 World Cup, Chennai Super Kings coach Stephen Fleming heaped praise on the evolution of Shivam Dube as a player.

"Yeah, I think it's fantastic. Dube has proven this year that there's a lot more to him than just hitting spinners. He has raw power, which is something that really impressed us and he has consistently done that during the tournament," Fleming said ahead of CSK's IPL fixture against Punjab Kings on Wednesday.

"And in a World Cup, you need those X-factor players. I'm delighted that he will get that opportunity."

Fleming also touched upon how the mental aspect in Dube's game has been improving as he gains more experience.

"He's a lot more complete in terms of what he's trying to do and understanding this game, and that comes with a little bit of experience. We've also benefited from him working hard on areas where he wasn't so strong."

"He has also continued to develop his strengths, which is the ability to hit the ball long and quite regularly. And he's done that for us this year. So, if that form continues, he is going to be an impactful player for India," Fleming added.

LSG compounds MI's misery with four-wkt. win

IPL-17

Abhishek Saini
LUCKNOW

A no-show by Mumbai Indians (MI) batters nudged the side closer to the brink of elimination and gifted a four-wicket victory to Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) in their Indian Premier League match at the Ekana Cricket Stadium here on Tuesday.

On a day when India announced the T20 World Cup side, its captain, vice-captain, and No. 4 fell for only 14 runs in Mumbai's meagre display with the willow.

Rohit Sharma started with an inventive paddle sweep off Mohsin Khan but sliced the next delivery to the cover fielder.

Suryakumar Yadav followed in the same vein getting strangled down leg three deliveries after smoking a half-tracker over mid wicket. Ravi Bishnoi's direct hit charging in from point caught Tilak Varma short of the striker's end. Hardik Pandya's golden duck meant the visitors hobbled to 28 for four by the end of the PowerPlay.

Ishan Kishan's match-saving 53-run alliance with Nehal Wadhera (46, 41b, 4x4, 2x6) allowed MI some breathing time before rearguard muscle from Tim David (35 n.o., 18b, 3x4, 1x6) took it to 144 for seven.

Pulling his weight: Stoinis complemented his effective bowling with some resourceful batting. SANDEEP SAXENA

Points table

	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Rajasthan Royals	9	8	1	16	0.694
Kolkata Knight Riders	9	6	3	12	1.096
Lucknow Super Giants	10	6	4	12	0.094
Chennai Super Kings	9	5	4	10	0.810
Sunrisers Hyderabad	9	5	4	10	0.075
Delhi Capitals	11	5	6	10	-0.442
Gujarat Titans	10	4	6	8	-1.113
Punjab Kings	9	3	6	6	-0.187
Mumbai Indians	10	3	7	6	-0.272
Royal Challengers	10	3	7	6	-0.415

In its pursuit, LSG needed back-to-back pull shots from Marcus Stoinis (62, 45b, 7x4, 2x6) off Gerald Coetzee in the fourth over to break the snooze that fell upon it after the early wicket of debutant Arshin Kulkarni.

Rahul took a leaf out of his partner's book in the next over from Nuwan Thushara and pocketed 18 runs in boundaries. Stoinis reserved his onslaught for Jasprit Bumrah too, lofting the Purple Cap holder over the long-off fence in the sixth over. The LSG captain, however, perished trying to take on his counterpart Hardik Pandya, holing out at deep mid wicket.

Deepak Hooda top-edging a swat off Pandya to mid off could not slow down Marcus Stoinis either, who romped to a 39-ball fifty.

The game was in the home team's hand when Mohammed Nabi prised out Stoinis in the 15th over. The fall of Ashton Turner and Ayush Badoni in the space of six deliveries prolonged the contest to the final over but could not prevent the inevitable.

SCOREBOARD

MUMBAI INDIANS
Ishan Kishan c Mayank b Bishnoi 32 *(36b, 3x4)*, Rohit Sharma c Stoinis b Mohsin 4 *(5b, 1x4)*, Suryakumar Yadav c Rahul b Stoinis 10 *(6b, 1x6)*, Tilak Varma run out 7 *(11b, 1x4)*, Hardik Pandya c Rahul b Naveen 0 *(1b)*, Nehal Wadhera b Mohsin 46 *(41b, 4x4, 2x6)*, Tim David (not out) 35 *(18b, 3x4, 1x6)*, Mohammad Nabi b Mayank 1 *(2b)*, Gerald Coetzee (not out) 1 *(2b)*; Extras (lb-2, nb-2, w-4): 8; Total (for seven wkts. in 20 overs): 144.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-7 (Rohit, 1.3 overs), 2-18 (Suryakumar, 2.4), 3-27 (Tilak, 5.1), 4-27 (Hardik, 5.2), 5-80 (Kishan, 13.6), 6-112 (Wadhera, 17.1), 7-123 (Nabi, 18.1).

SUPER GIANTS BOWLING
Stoinis 3-0-19-1, Mohsin 4-0-36-2, Naveen 3.5-0-15-1, Mayank 3.1-0-31-1, Bishnoi 4-0-28-1, Hooda 2-0-13-0.

LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS
K.L. Rahul c Nabi b Hardik 28 *(22b, 3x4, 1x6)*, Arshin Kulkarni **(Impact Player in place of Mayank)** lbw b Thushara 0 *(1b)*, Marcus Stoinis c Tilak b Nabi 62 *(45b, 7x4, 2x6)*, Deepak Hooda c Bumrah b Hardik 18 *(18b, 2x4)*, Nicholas Pooran (not out) 14 *(14b, 1x4)*, Ashton Turner b Coetzee 5 *(9b)*, Ayush Badoni run out 6 *(6b, 1x4)*, Krunal Pandya (not out) 1 *(1b)*; Extras (lb-4, w-7): 11; Total (for six wkts. in 19.2 overs): 145.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-1 (Arshin, 0.4), 2-59 (Rahul, 7.2), 3-99 (Hooda, 13.1), 4-115 (Stoinis, 14.5), 5-123 (Turner, 17.1), 6-133 (Badoni, 18.1).

MUMBAI INDIANS BOWLING
Thushara **(Impact Player in place of Suryakumar)** 4-0-30-1, Bumrah 4-0-17-0, Coetzee 3-0-29-1, Chawla 3-0-23-0, Hardik 4-0-26-2, Nabi 1.2-0-16-1.

Toss: LSG.

PoM: Stoinis.

LSG won by four wickets with four deliveries remaining.

Next assignment

MI: May 3 vs **KKR**
Mumbai, 7.30 p.m.

LSG: May 5 vs **KKR**
Lucknow, 7.30 p.m.

Super Kings will strive to break out of mid-table jam

S. Dipak Ragav
CHENNAI

Following its thumping 78-run win over Sunrisers Hyderabad, Chennai Super Kings will look to move clear of a tight midfield pack of teams when it takes on a mercurial Punjab Kings at the MAC Stadium here on Wednesday.

The Super Kings bounced back in style against SRH with a clinical performance. Ruturaj Gaikwad continued his merry run while Daryl Mitchell finally found form. More importantly, the host took wickets, thanks to Tushar Deshpande, in the Power-Play, an area where the side has struggled often this season.

However, the form of Ajinkya Rahane continues to be a cause of concern, and there is a case to be made for giving someone like Sameer Rizvi an opportunity.

Meanwhile, the Kings arrived in the city in a buoyant mood after their sensational record-chase of 262 against Kolkata Knight Riders. The win was set up by openers Prabhsimran Singh and Jonny Bairstow, both of whom finally came to the fore after an underwhelming start to the season. If the top-order can be more consistent, it eases the burden on Shashank Singh and Ashutosh Sharma, who have had to do the heavy lifting with the bat.

If Shikhar Dhawan returns – a call on his availability will be taken on match day – it will bolster Punjab's chances. But the side's bigger worry is its bowling, as the pace attack has leaked runs like a sieve.

Having won just three games, it is a do-or-die match for the visitors, and a loss could well end their hopes of qualification.

Waiting for another chance: It remains to be seen whether CSK will give Rizvi one more opportunity. S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

Today's match

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS vs. PUNJAB KINGS

Chennai, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD
PLAYED: 28
CSK 15 | PBKS 13

PREVIOUS MEETING
PBKS won by four wickets, 2023

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & JIO CINEMA

INBRIEF

Swiatek fights past Maia to make Madrid semifinals

Iga Swiatek defeated Beatriz Haddad Maia 4-6, 6-0, 6-2 and reach the Madrid Open semifinals for a second straight year on Tuesday. In the men's draw, third-seeded Daniil Medvedev was given the run around by Alexander Bublik before winning 7-6(3), 6-4. World No. 8 Andrey Rublev comfortably defeated Tallon Griekspoor 6-2, 6-4.

Other results: Men: Fourth round: Fritz bt Hurkacz 7-6(2), 6-4; Cerundolo bt Zverev 6-3, 6-4.

India sweeps team titles in Asian carrom championships

India swept both the men's and women's team championships in the sixth Asian carrom championships in Maldives.

The results, finals: Men: India bt Maldives 3-0 (K. Srinivas bt Ismail Azmeen 25-19, 25-3; Md. Ghufran bt Hassan Nazim 25-8, 25-22; Sandeep Dive & Jugal Kishor Dutta bt Adam Adeel & Ibrahim Hujan 25-17, 25-5).
Women: India bt Sri Lanka 3-0 (Rashmi Kumari bt Tashmila Kavindi 25-0, 25-15; Nagajothi Kathavarayan bt Roshita Joseph 25-1, 25-0; Aaknaksha Kadam & Shainy Sebastian bt Tharushi Himahansika & Hirushi Malshani 25-16, 25-12).

Vishvanath, Akash and Preet advance to u-22 semifinals

Vishvanath Suresh, Akash Gorkha and Preet Malik advanced to the under-22 semifinals on Tuesday as Indian boxers continued to add medals to their tally at the ASBC Asian u-22 and youth championships at Astana. Vishvanath (48kg) dominated Iran's Hassani Seyedarsham in a one sided-affair for a 5-0 win. Akash (60kg) outclassed Ebadi Arman of Iran with a similar scoreline while Preet (67kg) earned an easy win with the Referee Stopping the Contest in the first round against Vietnam's Nguyen Duc Ngoc.

Dominant India takes a 2-0 lead

Radha Yadav's splendid show helped bundle out Bangladesh for a paltry total; Hemalatha's quickfire unbeaten 41 takes the visitor over the line

INDIA IN BANGLADESH

Press Trust of India
SYLHET (BANGLADESH)

On fire: Hemalatha smashed a 24-ball 41. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Radha Yadav and D. Hemalatha sizzled produced an all-round show as a dominant India beat Bangladesh by 19 runs under the Duckworth/Lewis method in a rain-marred second women's T20 International here on Tuesday.

Led by left-arm spinner Radha's splendid show, Indian bowlers bundled out Bangladesh for 119 after the hosts opted to bat first.

Radha finished with excellent figures of 3/19, while there were two wickets apiece for Deepti Sharma (2/14) and Shreyanka Patil (2/24).

For Bangladesh, opener Murshida Khatun top-scored with 46 off 49 balls.

Chasing a modest total, India lost an early wicket as Shafali Verma (0) was caught down the leg side after she tried to flick it through fine leg. Hemalatha, however, blazed away to a 24-ball 41 as India raced to 47 for one in 5.2 overs, when the heaven opened up for the second time during the match. Hemalatha smashed five fours and two sixes in her unbeaten knock.

The par score was 28 and the Indian team was ahead by 19 runs, and with the surface rendered unplayable by the heavy rain, the visitors were declared winners.

India thus took a 2-0 lead in the five-match series.

Earlier, Dilara Akter got the Bangladesh innings underway when she pulled Renuka Singh over mid-wicket for a four in only the second ball of the match.

Akter got into a good position and whipped off her pads a swinging Renuka delivery over backward square leg for a boundary.

An 11-run first over was followed by the wicket of Akter.

One-down bat Sobhana Mostary opened her account with a boundary as she drove a Renuka delivery past backward point.

Off-spinner Shreyanka Patil struck in her very first over, having Mostary (19 off 15 balls) trapped in front of the wicket after a promising start by the batter.

Brought into the attack for the first time in the eighth over, left-arm spinner Radha started on a bright note before removing Bangladesh captain Nigar Sultana and Fahima Khatun off successive balls.

Radha, however, could not complete a hat-trick as Sultana Khatun struck her for a boundary.

The scores:

Bangladesh 119 in 20 overs (Murshida Khatun 46, Radha Yadav 3/19) lost to India 41 for one in 5.2 overs (D. Hemalatha 41 n.o.).

Archer passes fitness test, back in the England squad

T20 WC

Agence France-Presse
LONDON

Ready to fire: Archer, who has been out of action due to injury, will be keen to do well at the marquee event. FILE PHOTO

Pacer Jofra Archer was on Tuesday recalled to England's squad for the defence of its T20 World Cup title after being out of action for a year.

The 29-year-old, who has endured a string run of injuries since his international breakthrough in 2019, has not played competitive cricket for a year following a right elbow injury.

But he has been passed fit and takes his place in a 15-man squad that will defend the title Jos Buttler's side won in Australia in 2022.

Nortje returns for SA

Pacer Anrich Nortje will return to international action after a ninth-month injury layoff while the uncapped duo of Ryan Rickelton and Ottniel Baartman was included in South Africa's T20 World Cup squad on Tuesday.

Aiden Markram will lead the side in what will be his first World Cup assignment since being named T20I captain.

The squads:

England: Jos Buttler (Capt., wk), Moeen Ali, Jofra Archer, Jonny Bairstow, Harry Brook, Sam Curran, Ben Duckett, Tom Hartley, Will Jacks, Chris Jordan, Liam Livingstone, Adil Rashid, Phil Salt, Reece Topley and Mark Wood.

South Africa: Aiden Markram (Capt.), Ottniel Baartman, Gerald Coetzee, Quinton de Kock, Bjorn Fortuin, Reeza Hendricks, Marco Jansen, Heinrich Klaasen, Keshav Maharaj, David Miller, Anrich Nortje, Kagiso Rabada, Ryan Rickelton, Tabraiz Shamsi and Tristan Stubbs. **Reserves:** Nandre Burger and Lungi Ngidi.

Lewandowski scores hat-trick in Barcelona's facile win over Valencia

EURO LEAGUES

Reuters
BARCELONA

Robert Lewandowski scored a hat-trick in the second half to help Barcelona claim a hard-fought 4-2 win on Monday over visitors Valencia, which was leading 2-1 when it was reduced to 10 men just before the break.

Barca moved back to second in LaLiga on 73 points as it leapfrogged surprise package Girona, who are third with 71. Those two teams will meet in a Catalonia derby on Saturday.

Barcelona's win postponed for a couple of weeks Real Madrid's almost inevitable title celebrations as Carlo Ancelotti's side sit atop the standings on 84 points.

Valencia keeper Giorgi Mamardashvili saw red for a handball outside the box before the break.

The results:
LaLiga: Barcelona 4 (Lopez 22, Lewandowski 49, 82, 90+3) bt Valencia 2 (Duro 27, Pepelu 38-pen).
Serie A: Genoa 3 (Thorsby 17, Frendrup 27, Gudmundsson 63) bt Cagliari 0.

LIVE TELECAST

Badminton: Thomas & Uber Cup, Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema, 7 a.m.
IPL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema, 7.30 p.m.
Champions League: Sony Sports Ten 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 12.30 a.m. (Thursday).

The eye is bored by repetition; bowlers need help

BETWEEN WICKETS
Suresh Menon

It is possible that even as you read this, the first score of 300-plus in an IPL innings might have been made already. Nepal's 314 for three against Mongolia is the record in a T20International, but franchise cricket is of a higher standard.

Already the 100-mark in the first PowerPlay has been crossed. Six-hitting, the basis of all tall scores, might still be exciting but only just. Repetition is beginning to suck the thrill out of it. As the poet W.H. Auden said, the eye is bored by repetition. In fact, repetition doesn't create memories.

The IPL is being played for the 17th time, which means there are enough batters who first took to the game when they were in the first grade or so, and have grown with it.

Inevitable

We no longer gasp at 20-plus runs in an over, 24 sixes in an innings or 42 in a match. When Will Jacks takes just 10 deliveries to move from 50 to 100, it is merely interesting, not astounding. Someone, we tell ourselves, was bound to do it sooner or later. The more often such records are broken, the more inevitable it looks; unexpectedness, the essence of competition, is being replaced by inevitability. You can have too much of a good thing.

There aren't too many angles left unexplored by either batter or bowler. Fielders on the boundary don't worry the hitter who aims to strike into the crowd. Even the great Jasprit Bumrah has been taken for 18 in a single over. What might cause a sharp intake of breath might actually be a forward defence or a batter letting a ball go through to the wicket keeper unharmed. That might suggest a cosmic disturbance.

Hundreds by Will Jacks (41 balls) and Travis Head (in 39) merely seem to be preparation for a 25-ball century.

Traditional statistics have become meaningless. When Delhi Capitals' Jake Fraser-McGurk made a 27-ball 84 against Mumbai Indians, the significant statistic was not the strike rate of 311, but the fact that of the 104 deliveries he faced, he attempted boundaries off 77. So here's a new metric: aggressive shot percentage.

Is the end of T20 near?

But does all this lead up to one conclusion: that the end of T20 is approaching faster than predicted? Theoretically, a team could hit each of the 120 deliveries it receives for six, and that would be that.

At the start of the previous century, physicists spoke about the end of physics, as if there was nothing remaining to be discovered.

That was just before the quantum revolution and the opening of new pathways. The political philosophers who emphasised the end of history are discovering that they spoke too soon.

Perhaps the approaching death of the T20 is an exaggeration. The future of the format is in the hands of the bowlers. It is likely that batting will peak, reaching a stage beyond which it cannot progress (at least for a while) as the bowlers reassert themselves.

There is too the question of human limit, a question that pops up every Olympic year. If the rule-makers are enlightened, there will be an attempt to create a level playing field even if it means giving the bowler the greater advantage.

Perhaps a batter might be declared leg before even if the ball pitches outside the line of the leg stump. Perhaps the benefit of the doubt will always go in favour of the bowler. Perhaps the two best bowlers might be allowed to bowl six overs each in an innings.

All this just for the shortest format of the game, of course. Once it is accepted in theory that bowlers need help, there are always possibilities.

A recent cartoon doing the rounds on social media summed up the bowlers' plight well.

It shows a bunch of bowlers led by Mitchell Starc carrying banners saying things like 'Stop the Batriarchy', 'Bowlers Matter' and 'Abolish the Impact Substitute'. Like the best jokes, these reveal important truths.

Not supporting acts

Bowlers are not supporting acts. As the great Erapalli Prasanna said recently, "You can say all you want about batting, but a match does not begin till someone bowls."

IPL cricket may be 'progressing' too quickly for its own good.

Sreejith nets a treble in ISRO FC's win over Netaji FC

BENGALURU ROUND UP

Sports Bureau

Sreejith scored a hat-trick to help ISRO FC beat Netaji FC 4-1 in the BDFA C-division league football on Tuesday.

The results:

ISRO FC 4 (Sajith 2, Sreejith 3, 16, 47) bt Netaji FC 1 (Kavi 45).

Town SC Hoskote 1 (Rajat 60) bt RBI FC 0.

Big win for Alchemy IFA

Alchemy IFA smashed seven past Kemp Juniors in a KSFA Women's B-division football league match here on Tuesday.

The results:

Alchemy IFA 7 (Surekha 3, 46, 47, V. Prathiksha 17, Saanchi Ravipati 31, 45, S. Sandhya 50) bt Kemp Juniors 1 (Richa Batia 49).

Y BEFC 3 (Hasvika Sridharan 16, Annika Navneet 43, 50) bt El Mundo 1 (Dhayani 25).

Mysore VFA 5 (Abinaya 10, G. Nivetha 13, 18, Neha John 28, S. Shriya 48) bt GRK FC 0.

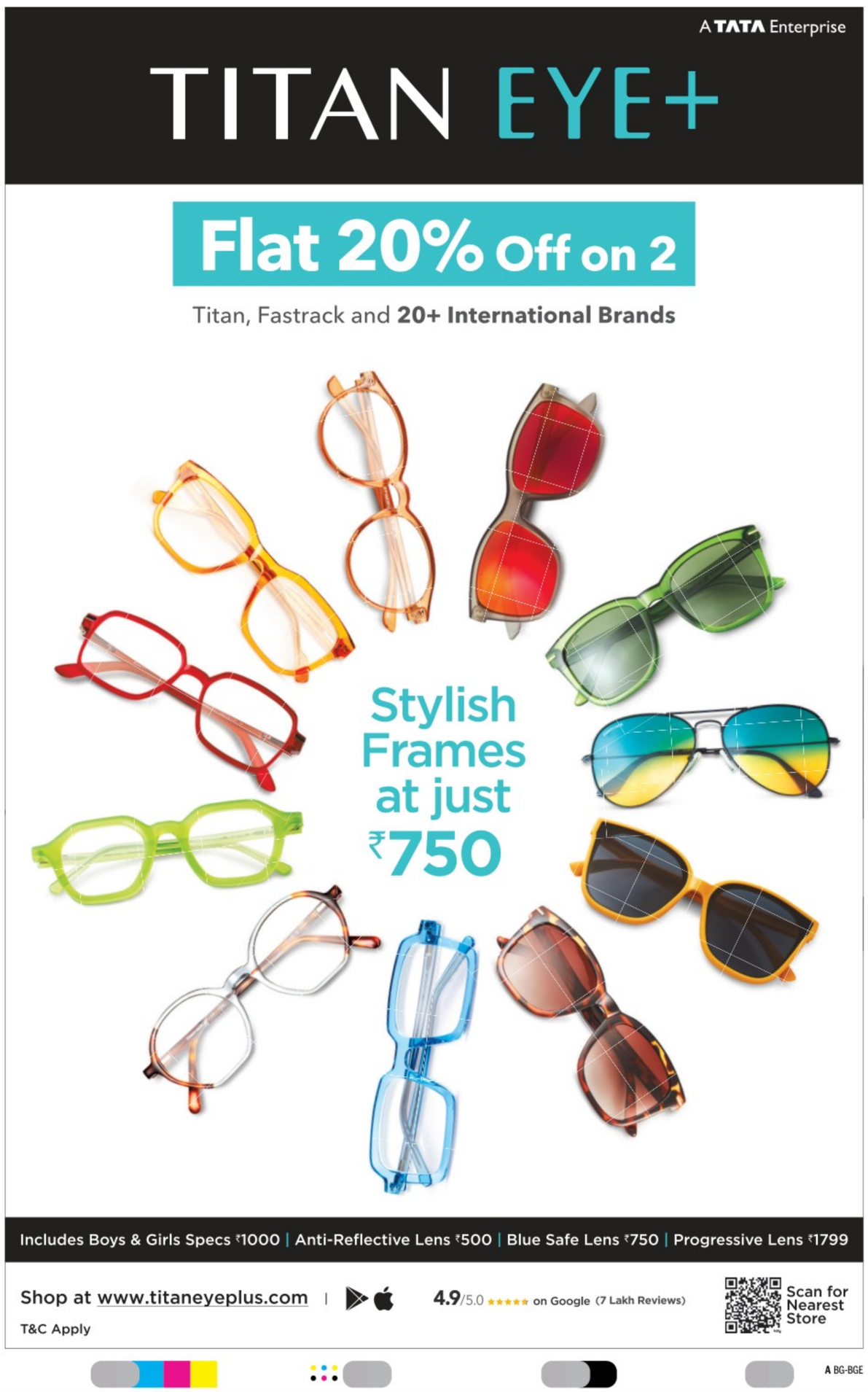
Easy for Just Cricket

Just Cricket restricted Panthers CA to 69 for nine and went on to win by 10 wickets in the Tiger Cup u-16 tournament.

The scores:

DPS South 169/4 in 30 overs (Dhruv Santosh 87, Syaamantak Anirudh 45) lost to Six CA 173/3 in 26.4 overs (Dhruv Krishnan 90).

CBT Macushla 146/6 in 30 overs (Shahan Shadab 48) bt Gopalan 139/8 in 30 overs (Amegh 66, Akshaj Kathuria 3/17, Rishab Subherwal 3/23).

PESCA 151/9 in 30 overs (K. Adhrit 48, Kaustubh Gupta 3/20) lost to RXCA 152/2 in 21.4 overs (Vismay Raj 89).

Panthers CA 69/9 in 30 overs (Chayanveer Sharma 3/14, V. Akilan 3/16) lost to Just Cricket 73/0 in 7.1 overs.